

A Precious Pearl Gift from

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

To the Muslim Ummah



Du'a Kumayl

يَا سَرِيعَ الرِّضَا اغْفِرْ لِمَنْ

لَا يَمْلِكُ إِلَّا الدُّعَاءُ ... إِرْحَمْ مَنْ رَأْسُ مَالِهِ

الرَّجَاءُ وَسِلَاحُهُ الْبُكَاءُ،

O' He, whose pleasure is easily and readily obtained!

Forgive him who owns nothing but supplication

Have mercy upon him whose only asset is hope

And whose armor (protective covering) is tears!

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI



Published by

Organization of North American

Shia Ithna-asheri Muslim Communities

(NASIMCO)



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دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

DU'A KUMAYL

**PART I: NATURE OF SINS AND
PREREQUISITES FOR FORGIVENESS**

A Brief Commentary by

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KERMALI**

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**North American Shia Ithna-Asheri Muslim Communities
(NASIMCO)**

To

Amir Al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a),

and

His Elite and Trustworthy Companion,

Kumayl ibn Ziyad Nakha'i

For Giving the Muslim Ummah the Gem of the Du'a

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name Allah the All-Beneficent, the All-Merciful

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا
تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

***“Say (O’ our Prophet Muhammad that Allah assures His
servants) “O’, My servants who have committed
extravagances against their own selves, do not despair of the
Mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is
the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful.” (Q. 39:53)***

اَللّٰهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O’ Allah, bless Muhammad and his Pure Progeny

COMMENTARY ON DU'A KUMAYL

Author: Mu'allim Muhammadhusein Kermali

Editor: Dr. Bashir Dattoo

Formatted by: Shaykh Muhammadraza Janmohamed

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PROFILE:

MARHUM JAFFER ABDULHUSEIN

BACKGROUND

Marhum Jaffer Abdulhusein, popularly known as Abdul, was the eldest son of Marhum Mohamed Taki Abdulhusein Jaffer, who was well-known as Taki Teacher. Marhum Jaffer took up his father's profession and became himself a famous and popular teacher in Zanzibar.

NEW YORK

Marhum moved with his family to New York in 1976 and became a prominent member of the Shi'a Ithna-Asheri Jamaat of New York. After playing a key role in the Jamaat for many years, Marhum moved his business, together with his staff and families, to Orlando which became attractive to investors as the place was developing fast, particularly, in the building industry.

ORLANDO

Prior to Marhum's move to Orlando, the local Jamaat was very small with only a handful of members. The new arrivals formed the nucleus for the rapid growth of our community. Marhum assisted the new families by providing them with accommodation, advising them where and how to invest in various businesses and avenues which were open for work and employment.

ORLANDO JAMAAT

Marhum played a key role in the development and progress of the local Jamaat which he supported in every respect. He worked tirelessly in the framing of the first Constitution and

later in revising it as the community grew in great numbers. Marhum took great care in seeing that the management of the Jamaat was strong and well-disciplined.

GENEROSITY AND PHILANTHROPY

Marhum's generosity and philanthropic nature were well-known. Several institutions benefited from his generosity. Marhum's philanthropy was not limited to the local institutions but also extended to overseas countries, particularly India, where several schools for the poor children are run under the sponsorship of Mumtaz Foundation, a Charitable Institution formed in 2002 in memory of Marhum's first wife, Marhuma Mumtaz.

DU'A KUMAYL

Marhum was seen participating regularly in the recital of Du'a Kumayl on Thursday nights at the Orlando Center. Marhum loved this Du'a's central message of man's humility before his creator and Allah (swt)'s all encompassing mercy towards His creation. This publication has, therefore, been sponsored by the Mumtaz Foundation in the memory of and "ithale thawabe jariyah" for Marhum's soul.

THE END

The vacuum created among family and friends as well as religious circles of the community and also in the business, civic and political circles is evident by the fact that all miss him on his departure from this world.

All are kindly requested to remember Marhum with du'a for peace and tranquility and Allah (swt)'s Mercy for the Marhum's soul.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Shaykh Vinay Khetia has kindly written the Foreword for the Book at my request. I acknowledge and appreciate his ready response to my request and cannot but express my deep gratitude and sincere thanks to him for devoting his valuable time in spite of his busy schedule to check the text and write an impressive Foreword, being best qualified in view of his doctoral dissertation on, among other related topics, Du'a Kumayl.

Shaykh Vinay has studied the philosophy of Du'a Kumayl in depth and has done extensive research on it as part of his wider doctoral dissertation that deals with the study of Shi'i devotional literature as a form of liturgical theology. He has also done an annotated explanatory English translation of al-Fusul al-Ashara fil al- Ghayba by Shaykh al-Mufid (1022 CE).

Shaykh Vinay is currently a fourth-year Ph.D. Candidate in Religious Studies at McMaster University. He previously studied in London and Damascus Seminaries. He has written and published various articles on the subjects of the Qur'an and Islamic Law in peer-reviewed academic publications such as al-Bayan Journal of the Qur'an and Hadith.

Shaykh Vinay is an eloquent lecturer and a renowned scholar. He is a well-known Muballigh who recites Majalis especially in Muharram and Ramadhan at various locations of our Centers in Canada and the U.S.A. Moreover, he conducts seminars on various Islamic topics in our Center at Bathurst and is a visiting lecturer at our seminaries in Canada and the U.S.A.

The book has been ably and skillfully edited by Dr. Bashir Datto who made valuable contribution in improving the quality and flow of the text. I am deeply indebted to him for devoting his valuable time in making painstaking edits and suggesting ideas for enriching the text.

Dr. Bashir did his doctoral studies at the London School of Economics and Political Science of the University of London. He was an Associate Professor at the University of Dar-es-Salaam in Tanzania and a Visiting Research Fellow at Minnesota and Princeton Universities in the U.S.A. He later left the academia to enter the field of marketing research and consulting and worked as Senior Vice President of leading firms in the U.S.A.

He is now retired and lives in Florida where he serves our community as well as the World Federation as a member of the Curriculum Development Team that is developing an innovative, integrated curriculum for our worldwide madaris.

Dr. Bashir has contributed many articles to our Community magazines and authored two religious books: "Perspectives on Islamic Faith and History" (2nd enlarged edition, TTQ, 2013) and "Bookend" Revolutions in Islamic History" (World Federation, 2015). They have both been acclaimed by the enlightened readership in our community.

Shaykh Muhammadraza Janmohamed of Orlando, Florida has kindly formatted the book beautifully ready for print. I am grateful and indebted to him for his "lil-Llah" services for the cause of Islam in general and for Madhab-e- Ahlul Bayt in particular.

Shaykh is a well-known lecturer and Zakir. He has been serving all the three Shi'a Centers in Orlando, Florida and especially

Husseini Islamic Center in various religious fields for more than fifteen years.

He assists the Resident 'Aalim and, in his absence, conducts Jama'at and Jum'ah Prayers and recites Majalis on different occasions. He is indeed a great asset to the community. May Allah (swt) increase his "Taufiqaat" to continue to render his services and reward him amply in this world and in the Hereafter.

FOREWORD

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
و صلى الله على رسول الله و على آله
الطيبين الأطهار

In the Name of Allāh the Most Beneficent the Most Merciful

And May the blessing of Allāh be upon the Messenger of Allah and his pristinely purified progeny.

The supplication of Kumayl b. Ziyād has been ascribed by Twelver Shī'īs to the first Imām, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib (d. 40 A.H./661 C.E.) and various versions of the text can be found throughout the various works of Shii-Muslim devotion from the 5th/11th century Baghdād up to and including the most famous contemporary prayer manual, namely, *Mafāth al-jinān* (The Keys of Paradise) written by the late Shaykh 'Abbās al-Qummī (ra). Contemporary Shi'īs of varying linguistic-cultural backgrounds tend to recite this prayer in their homes and places of congregation as a part of their weekly Thursday night religious programs.¹ Thus, one could assert that *Du'ā Kumayl* is

¹ I can certainly remark without hesitation that this prayer is commonly known by both specialists and non-specialists alike in the Shī'ī community in so far as I have witnessed its performance in every community which I have visited. This information can also be easily gleamed via online search of Shī'ī communal programs worldwide.

among the most often recited supererogatory acts of worship in the Shī'ī world.

On that note, I will briefly highlight the place of *du'ā* literature within the broader context of Twelver Shī'ī intellectual history and then move on to provide a few brief comments on the importance of the work at hand. By as early as the late 3rd/9th and up to the 5th/11th centuries Imāmī scholars had already begun compiling major compendiums of transmitted material (*ḥadīth*) with unmistakable scholarly conviction that much of this material originated from the Prophet Muhammad and his pristine progeny (*as*), collectively known as the people of the house (*ahl al-bayt*).² A key element of this 3rd/9th - 5th/11th century formative Imāmī literature is a vast collection of devotional literature described as *'adīyah* (supplications, sing. *du'ā*) and *ziyārāt* (visitations-devotional elegies).³ This material is often found in specialized devotional-prayer manuals such as the *Miṣbāḥ al-mutahajjid* (The lantern of the night worshipper), compiled by Shaykh al-Ṭūsī (d.460/1067), in addition to the copious material found in the principle four *ḥadīth* compendiums.⁴ Aghā Buzūrg Tihrānī emphasizes that upon

² For the purposes of this study, the term *Shī'ī*, *Imāmī* or *Imāmīyah* refers to the Twelver *Shī'īs* unless stated otherwise.

³ *Ziyārāt* refers to the act of visiting the graves of the Prophet Muḥammad and the Imams (*as*) as well as the devotion and elegy recited when addressing them.

⁴ The four principle books of *ḥadīth* are *al-Kāfī* compiled by Muḥammad ibn Ya'qūb al-Kulaynī (d.329/941), *Man lā yaḥḍuruḥu al-faqīh* compiled by Ibn Babawayh al-Qummī (Shaykh al-Ṣadūq) (d.381/991), *al-Iṣṭibṣār* and *Tahdhīb al-*

recourse to the 4th and 5th century books of *rijāl* and bibliographical indices one would come to learn that various companions of the Imāms had compiled a multitude of devotional manuals often entitled '*Amal al-yawm wa al-laylah* (devotional acts for the day and the night) or *Kitāb al-du'ā'/da'awāt* [The book of supplication(s)].⁵ Therefore it is not surprising to see that all of the principle Shī'ī ḥadīth collections of the formative period include sections on *du'ā'* and *ziyārāt*. The renowned bibliophile and scholar of ḥadīth, Aghā Buzūrg al-Tihirānī (d.1970 C.E.), goes further and emphasizes that these collections of supplications would have been primarily sourced from the Buyid-Shī'ī library of Shāpūr in Baghdad. To this effect, Aghā Buzūrg coins the term, "*al-uṣūl al-du'ā'īyah* (principle/original *du'ā'* sources)" to describe the collections from which various Shī'ī traditionists (*muḥaddithūn*) extracted the various prayers attributed to the Imāms prior to the Sunnī-Shī'ī riots which led to the burning of the library in 447/1055.⁶

Aḥkām compiled by Abī Ja'far al-Ṭūsī, more commonly known as Shaykh al-Ṭūsī.

⁵ Aghā Buzūrg Tihirānī, *al-Dharī'ah ilā taṣānīf al-Shī'ah* (Beirut: Dār al-Aḍwā', 1983), 1:158-159; 5:172-173.

⁶ Ya'qūt al-Ḥamawī (d.1229 C.E.), *Mu'jam al-buldān* (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1990), 1:534. For detailed discussion regarding this Shī'ī library, see: Aghā Buzūrg, 8:173. Aghā Buzūrg also mentions that contemporaneous to the activity of compiling devotional manuals, the famous four-hundred *uṣūl* (parchments or notebooks of ḥadīth) works were also said to have been housed in the expansive library of Shāpūr and other Shī'ī patrons in Baghdad which were frequented by all the prominent Shī'ī scholars of the day including Shaykh al-Ṭūsī. Amir Moezzi

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To further attest to the importance and proliferation of this genre of material, the prominent devotional specialist and maternal descendent of Shaykh al-Tūsī, Ibn Tāwūs (d.664/1266), claims to have owned seventy volumes of supplications (*sab'īn mujalladan fī al-da'āwāt*) in his personal library which he used as source material in the compilation of several of his own devotional manuals.⁷ This cumulative body

stresses a similar point in pointing out that it can be reasonably asserted that the early prayer tradition was compiled based upon earlier sources which most probably originated from the period of the Imāms themselves. In fact the vast majority of the supplications and ziyārāt referred to by those who had access to these Buyid-era libraries would have been first-hand written notes, recorded by the companions of the Imāms (as) themselves. We can deduce with near surety that scholars like Shaykh al-Tusi had access to the original devotional compositions of the Imāms, as recorded verbatim by the aṣḥāb (companions), prior to their destruction. One such example is the recording of Du'ā Jawshan al-Ṣaghīr as taught by Imām al-Kāẓim (as) to a group of companions who wrote the words of the Imam right then and there. See: Aghā Buzūrg, 8:172-181.

⁷ *Raḍī al-Dīn 'Alī ibn Mūsā Tāwūs (Ibn Tāwūs), Muhaj al-da'āwāt. (Najaf: Dār al-Dhakā'ir, 1991), 347. Ibn Tāwūs (a direct descendent of Shaykh al-Tūsī) is especially recognized for the emphasis he laid on devotional literature and practice. By the end of his life, he had compiled two sets of devotional regiments for those wishing to attain "eternal felicity" (in his own words). The first regiment consisted of a compilation of ten large texts consisting of copious supplications and the required mannerisms associated with them, while the second regiment*

of devotional literature (*du'ā'* and *ziyārah*), in addition to the ritual regimens (*al-'āmāl*)⁸ associated with them, consist of an elaborate braiding of various mystical, theological and political motifs.⁹

consisted of five volumes with texts of a similar genre. See: Etan Kohlberg. A Medieval Muslim Scholar At Work. (Leiden: Brill Publications, 1991), 49-50.

⁸ *In order to commemorate particular religious occasions such as the night of power (laylat al-qadr) or the 10th day of Muharram ('āshūrā), a ritual is performed which often includes the performance of specific ritual regimens ('āmāl). These regimens include the following: a ritual bath (al-ghusul), the recitation of specific 'adīyah and ziyārāt combined with a specified number of units (rak'āt) of recommended canonical prayer (ṣalāt) in addition to invoking specific names of God (adhkār/awrād). These devotional rituals are performed as a group or individually.*

⁹ *The content of these liturgies are filled with essential theological and polemical themes. These themes include but are not limited to the attributes of God, oneness of God, the immanence of God, the Imamate, the legacy of oppression and injustice (ẓulm and jawr) experienced by the Imams and their followers, mystical references to the journey (riḥlah) to and meeting with God (liqā allāh), details concerning life after death and even matters of Islamic law. Such examples can of course be identified in Du'ā' Kumayl ascribed to the first Imam, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, or Du'ā' Abī Ḥamzah Thumālī ascribed to the 4th Imām, Zayn al-Ābidīn('Alī b. al-Ḥusayn) . For liturgies with marked political and divisive sectarian overtones including references to the divine presence and knowledge of the Imams,*

On this note, the project embarked upon by Mu'allim Mohamed Hussein Kermali is more than appropriate and needed for the community at large. The reason is that, by the grace of God the Twelver Shi'i community and especially the Twelver Shi'i-Khoja community across North America, Europe, Africa, and South Asia have been reciting this blessed supplication for generations. However, in order for a supplication to be truly appreciated, its basic meaning and ideally, its *bayān* (exposition), should not be lost to those desiring to garner its towering spiritual rewards. Until now, accessible English literature on the topic of Twelver Shi'i supplication has been sparse, aside from a few recent beneficial works published by the World Federation and other community publishers. Therefore, when the author of the present work, Mu'allim Mohamed Hussein Kermali, approached me to write the foreword I hastened to accept the privilege to do so. My acceptance was due to the fact that I am convinced that a book of this nature will be of immense value to all those who are seeking to develop a much needed and urgent literacy with the *kalām* (words) of the Ahl al-Bayt (as). There is perhaps no better place to start than to develop one's cognizance of a ritual (such as Du'ā Kumayl) which is already being performed but perhaps not appreciated to the degree it should be in the absence of an accessible commentary for the average English reader and the faithful at large.

refer to: Ziyārat al-Wārith ascribed to the 5th Imam, al-Baqir and al-Ziyārat al-Jāmī'ah al-Kabīrah ascribed to the 9th Imam, Muḥammad b. 'Alī al-Naqī. The liturgies referenced above can be found in 4th century hijrī work of Shaykh al-Ṭūsī, Miṣbāḥ al-mutaḥajjid (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-A'lamī lil-Maṭbū'āt, 2002).

The Book takes a deep look at the various principal themes and analyses them briefly to see the meaning that lies behind these themes, beginning with the select Asmaul Husna mentioned by the Imam as a means of intercession and ending with the various classifications of sins or defiance that thwart Allah's mercy and forgiveness. The second part of the book at hand goes on to describe, according to the author, the supplication that the reciter makes to address Allah (swt) and to transcend above all materialistic attractions to a spiritually elevated mindset. It is in this sense that the Book constitutes the precious pearl gift from Amīr Mu'minīn 'Alī b. Abī Tālib (a) to the Muslim *ummah*.

From my humble perspective, the supplication of Kumayl can be counted among most profound lessons gifted to humanity by the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Tālib (as). If I had to describe the supplication in a nutshell, I may venture to state that on the 15th of Sha'bān whilst in *sajda* (prostration), the Commander of the Faithful poured his heart out to God Almighty. This most intimate form of devotion unveils for time eternity the envisioned dialogical narrative between the supplicant and God in which the beseecher embarks upon a tumultuous journey of the 'self' (*nafs*) which strives to unleash itself from the shackles of spiritual poverty beset with sins (*dhunūb*) and self-delusion (*ghurūr*), and instead hastens upwards towards *ma'rifah* (cognizance) of God in His sheer oneness to be brought nigh into the presence of His expansive mercy (*al-rahmah al-wāsi'ah*) and love (*ḥubb*). Thus, the prayer could certainly be described as a 'sacred' lesson in devotional theology in which 'Alī, akin to Saint Augustine (for the Christian faithful), taught the 'seekers' how to "express their deepest feelings and to find words for the dialectic" of the embattled

self before God.¹⁰ This interplay and braiding of concerns is not something unique to this supplication. Sam Gill correctly demonstrates that more often than not prayers, due to the materials available to us, tend to be approached as texts. Gill goes further and adds that these texts include within them an eclectic array of "theological, doctrinal, cultural, historical, aesthetic and creedal dimensions of a religious culture."¹¹ The presence of a rich array of multivalent themes in a supplication like Du'ā Kumayl brings to light the arduous yet exciting task in expounding upon the numerous sacred lessons therein, which with God's grace, shall light the lantern of guidance in our soul and enhance our determination ('azīma) to be faithful followers of the Qur'an and the Ahl al-Bayt (as). Furthermore, Du'ā' Kumayl can be studied as a genre of religious text which can be subject to a host of philological and literary inquiries, similar to the approach of Constance Padwick in her classical

¹⁰ *In light of the 'iṣmah or infallibility of the Prophet and the ahl al-bayt (the people of the house) which include, the Messenger of Allāh, Fāṭima al-Zahrā and the twelve Imāms (as). Thus it would not be an exaggeration to describe this prayer as constituting a source of sacred or divinely inspired knowledge for those Shī'īs who ascribe to the doctrine of infallibility. For the quotation, see: Friedrich Heiler, Prayer: A Study in the History and Psychology of Religion (Oxford: One world Publications, 1997 reprint), 127.*

¹¹ Sam D. Gill, "Prayer" in *The Encyclopedia of Religion* ed. Lindsay Jones 2nd ed. (Farmington: McMillian Reference USA, 2005), 11: 7367-7372; Gregory D. Alles, "Prayer: Religious Studies" in *Religion Past and Present* last accessed September 15th, 2013, www.brillonline.com.

work on Muslim devotions (1961). More generally, the supplications of the Ahl al-Bayt (as) would also be of interest to those involved in the study of the Biblical Psalms (collection of Biblical supplications) many of which are also exquisite Hebrew literary compositions composed of many devotional themes cognate to those found in the most eloquent and moving Arabic supplications originating from the people of the house (*ahl al-bayt*) (as).

Vinay Khetia

Toronto, Ontario

July 31st, 2015/ 14th of Shawwāl, 1436 A.H.



OVERVIEW OF DU'A KUMAYL IBN ZIYAD

Allamah Majlisi in Bihar al-Anwar and Shaykh al-Tusi in Misbah al-Mutahajjid have included the complete text of this Du'a in their respective books and have traced its source to the very early period in the history of Islam. They have also written about the merits of the Du'a. Great importance has been given by our Ae'mmah (a) to the Du'a which belongs to their private domain. It is a unique and dynamic Du'a for the spiritual elevation of a believer for it has an enormous power of reforming and changing a person into a spiritually- oriented being away from materialistic tendencies.

Among the many benefits of the Du'a are: giving protection against the evil of enemies, opening the gates of one's abundant income, obtaining forgiveness of sins and wrongdoings, instilling tranquility in the heart and bestowing peace of mind, and providing a sense of satisfaction with the feeling of forgiveness of one's sins.

The Du'a is originally that of Prophet Khidr (a) taught by Amir al-Mu'mineen to Kumayl who wrote it down as dictated, word by word, and has come down to us, generation after generation, in its original authentic form.

The main theme of the Du'a is the Nature of Sins and the Pre-requisites for their Forgiveness. One of the pre-requisites is Intercession. Amir al- Mu'mineen uses the Most Beautiful Names of Allah (swt), "*Asmaa' ul-Husna*", for the intercession. He selected the most powerful ten Names among the 99 Names

to seek forgiveness. A detail description is given of the characteristics of the ten Asmaa'.

Six categories of sins covering 46 of the most serious sins are analyzed together with their spiritual and physical harmful effects. The nature of these sins and the pre-requisites for their forgiveness are also discussed in detail.

The book also gives the outline of the contents of Part Two which will cover the remaining 146 verses of the Du'a, taking the supplicant to its peak and completing his submission to Allah (swt). The supplicant sees things differently. It reforms him spiritually and gets him away from the materialistic attractions to tasting the pleasure of feeling the connection with the spiritual realms. His soul is tranquil (Nafs-e-Mutmainnah) and he enjoys peace of mind and contentment.

دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

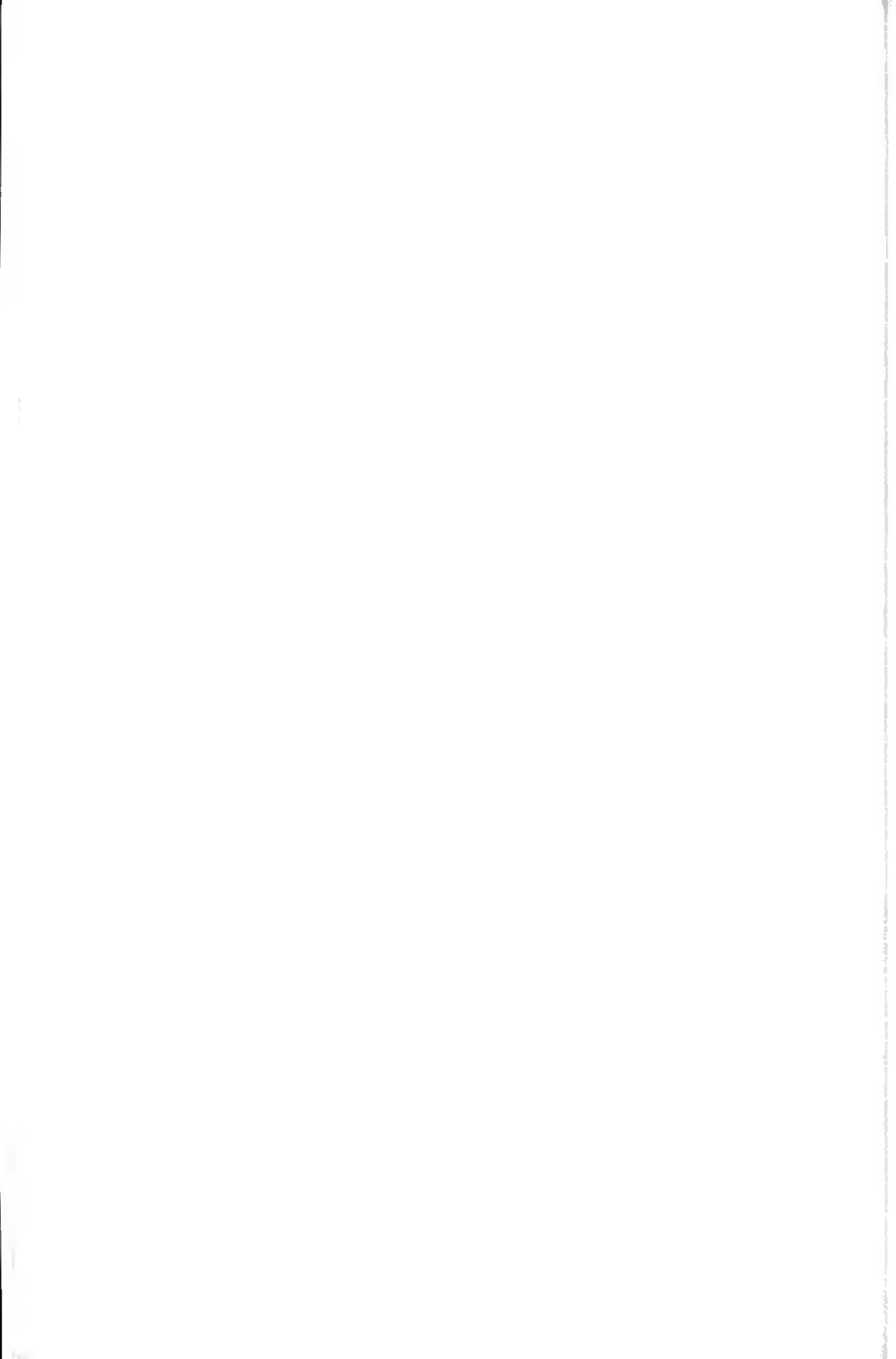
INTRODUCTION

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَمَنْ أَضَلُّ مِمَّنْ يَدْعُو مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ مَنْ لَا
يَسْتَجِيبُ لَهُ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَهُمْ عَنِ دُعَائِهِمْ
غَافِلُونَ

Who is more astray than he who calls on/invokes other than Allah? They (those whom he calls) will not answer him till the Day of Judgment and are even heedless or unaware of their invocations. (Q: 46:5)



INTRODUCTION

IMAM 'ALI TO KUMAYL

"I give this honor to you by entrusting this extraordinary Prayer (Du'a) of Prophet Khidr to you in consideration of your devoutness, piety, close companionship with me and your intellect and understanding," so said Imam 'Ali (a) to Kumayl ibn Ziyad Nakha'i.

Therefore, Du'a-e-Kumayl is not among the general du'as that form a large portion of du'as given in Mafatihul Jinan by Marhum Shaykh 'Abbas al-Qummi and in several other Books of Du'a such as Misbah and Dhadul Ma'ad. No doubt these du'as have been transmitted from our A'emmah (a) but they were not specifically asked for by the people. They were generally recommended by our Ae'mmah (a) to their followers for recitation on specific occasions and times.

On the other hand, Du'a-e-Kumayl belongs to the private domain as it was given in response to a special request by Kumayl to Imam 'Ali (a). So we should realize its great significance and give it due respect when it is recited. We should also try to learn its in-depth meaning and transform our lives accordingly.

PROPHET KHIDR

Prophet Khidr, by whose name this Du'a was originally known, was an extraordinary Prophet to whom Allah (swt) had given the knowledge of "ta'weel" (the secret knowledge of things and upcoming future events) on which he acted with special permission from Allah (swt) and also on the basis of his own intellect and knowledge.

Prophet Muhammad(s) and all our Ae'mmah (a) were also endowed with the knowledge of "ta'weel" and the unseen ('Imul-ghayb), on the basis of which they acted for the pleasure of Allah (swt) and only when the occasion demanded necessary action. It is said that Imam 'Ali (a) acted on his knowledge of "ta'weel" in fighting the battles of Jamal, Siffin and Nahrawan. Similarly, Imam Husayn (a) fought the battle of Karbala on his knowledge of "ta'weel."

Actions based on the knowledge of "ta'weel" are clearly illustrated by the events related in detail in Surah al-Kahf of the Qur'an (18: 60/82). Prophet Musa, an Ulul 'Azm Prophet, one of the most high ranking Prophets, thought, just once, that he was the most knowledgeable person of his time, and so was commanded by Allah to go out and look for His servant ("abd") endowed with more knowledge than him, at a place where the two seas joined together to form an estuary, and learn from him the knowledge of things that he did not have.

Accompanied by his attendant, Prophet Musa set out in search of the man whom Allah (swt) commanded him to meet. They covered a very long distance before they reached the junction of the two seas (the Gulf of Aqaba and the Gulf of Suez) at the head of the Red Sea where he saw the man at the shore.

PROPHET KHIDR VS. PROPHET MUSA

The man was Prophet Khidr whom Allah (swt) had blessed with the secret knowledge of "ta'weel" by which he could foresee future events and act on the command of Allah (swt) and the basis of his knowledge by taking appropriate steps to fix them.

After a short conversation in which Prophet Musa requested Prophet Khidr to take him together on his journey, Prophet Khidr agreed on the condition that Prophet Musa would not

query him about his actions that Prophet Musa would consider sinful, irrational and outrageous. However, he would not leave Prophet Musa (in a state of confusion but would explain the reasons for his actions later on during their journey. Prophet Musa undertook to remain silent and only watch the actions.

So they both went on a journey together. During the journey Prophet Khidr, acting on his secret knowledge, first, deliberately damaged a passenger boat sailing on the sea by boring a hole into its keel. Second, he killed an innocent boy for no apparent reason. Third, he built a new wall over an old one which had collapsed, while they visited a town whose habitants were hostile to them.

Prophet Musa was baffled by those actions and could not remain patient, so he queried Prophet Khidr about the action he had taken each time in spite of repeated warnings not to do so. Finally, owing to the impatience of Prophet Musa, Prophet Khidr decided to part company. Before he did that, he explained the reasons for his actions which are given in the verses referred to above. This illustration explains clearly the meaning of the term "ta'weel" used in several places in the Qur'an. It is in contrast to the term "tafseer" which gives only the apparent or outward explanation of the verses of the Qur'an.

All the present "tafaaseer" by various "mufasssireen" give the apparent exegesis of verses of the Qur'an. The knowledge of "ta'weel" has been given to only a few who are described as "*rasikhuna fil 'ilm*", people who are firmly rooted in knowledge. (Q. 3:7)

There are several verses in the Qur'an which are categorized as "mutashabih", meaning they have hidden meaning. Only Allah

(swt), His Messenger and those who are "*rasikhuna fil 'ilm*" know the meaning of these verses. (Q. 3:7)

In reply to a query about who the "*rasikhuna fil 'ilm*" are, the Prophet (s) replied, "They are those who do not do anything but only that which is just, righteous and good; they do not speak any word but that which is true; they are those whose hearts and minds are enlightened and rational; their stomachs (flesh and blood) are free from all that is forbidden to eat and drink." The Qur'an identifies them in Chapter 33, Al- Ahzab, verse 33, as those who have been purified with a thorough purification.

KUMAYL IBN ZIYAD'S BACKGROUND

It is important to look at the background of the person who has transmitted the extraordinary private supplication of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) so that its authenticity is established. It is also important to know the circumstances in which the supplication has been obtained from the Imam.

Kumayl ibn Ziyad Nakha'i belonged to one of the tribes from Yemen. He was among the group of elite, most trusted and loyal companions of Imam 'Ali (a). He was not a Sahaba as were Miqdad and Abu Dharr who lived during the time of the Prophet. Kumayl came from the subsequent second generation after the Prophet (s). Muslims who belonged to the second generation are called Tabi'een.

Imam 'Ali (a) had great confidence in Kumayl. He considered him close to his family because of his knowledge, piety, devoutness and unshakeable loyalty towards the Ahlul Bayt. The Imam also shared some secrets of future events with him and predicted that he would be killed mercilessly by Hajjaj ibn Yusuf as-Saqafi who became Minister of Defense under the

Umayyad Dynasty. The Imam appointed Kumayl as the Governor of Heet known as Ambaar in today's Iraq.

The Imam mentions about him rather unfavorably in one of his Letters in Nahjul Balagha for abandoning the strategy that was set out for him by the Imam. Kumayl temporarily left Heet with his army and went to a nearby town of Qarqisiya to sort out a problem which had arisen there. Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, the governor of Greater Syria, was informed about it. He immediately sent his marauding army to pass through Heet which had been left undefended. The enemy attacked and took control of an important strategic town. The Imam was informed about it and wrote the letter to reprimand Kumayl. Subsequently, he repented for his lack of foresight in leaving Heet exposing it to enemy attack which brought a lot of harm to it. The Imam pardoned him for his failure in discharging his responsibilities as the Governor and took him back as a close companion. (N.B. Letter No 61)

As a close confidant, the Imam allowed him access to his house late at night when he would not normally allow anyone else as it would infringe on the privacy of the family and interrupt his nightly prayers. This indicates how close Kumayl was to the Imam and the Ahlul Bayt. Therefore, this Du'a is a great blessing for us and we need to cherish it. It is a unique peak of eloquence in the domain of Du'as that we have as means of communication with Allah (swt).

KUMAYL'S BRAVERY

Kumayl was a brave man who stood firm against corruption, oppression, and injustice, as did several elite, loyal and close companions of Imam 'Ali (a) such as Malik al-Ashter, Zaid ibn Sohan and Sa'sa ibn Sohan. Kumayl was politically and socially

aware of the oppressive and corrupt conditions that prevailed at that time and did not hesitate to openly condemn actions of the rulers who were engaged in enriching themselves and their families through corruption and misappropriation of funds from the Public Treasury ("Baytul Maal").

Kumayl's conduct in opposing the corrupt rulers resulted in his exile and ultimate murder by the ruling regime in the year 82 A.H. He lived a long life of more than forty years after Imam 'Ali (a) and suffered a lot of atrocities at the hands of the ruling regimes. Many among Imam 'Ali (a)'s loyal companions met the same fate for their opposition against the rulers and their firm stand in defense of the Ahlul Bayt.

Kumayl acquired a lot of knowledge and spiritual training from Imam 'Ali (a) as most of the time he was in his companionship. He served the Imam sincerely and devotedly. He participated in several battles with Imam 'Ali (a), most notably in the Battle of Siffin. He attained a high status and degree of spirituality. History is silent about him during the period of the Imamat of Imam Hasan (a) and Imam Husayn (a). He was not present in Karbala during the time of the tragedy as he was not able to be there.

KUMAYL'S DEATH

Kumayl stood firm against the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt at the risk of his life and refused to denounce or speak a word against Imam 'Ali (a) when forced and threatened by al-Hajjaj ibn Yusuf. On the contrary, Kumayl spoke in praise of the Imam and was, consequently, killed cruelly and savagely by al-Hajjaj. Al-Hajjaj was an evil man who has gone down in history as a deadly villain because of his barbaric killings. He was thirsty for the blood of

the followers and the lovers of Imam 'Ali (a) and killed thousands of them in cold blood.

Al-Hajjaj was the villain who attacked Makka, the second time that such an attack occurred during the Umayyad rule. His army attacked the Ka'ba with stones and fire that burnt the black cloth which covers the Ka'ba. Next the army went on a rampage, looting Makkan houses and molesting their women. They terrorized the population for three days and left the holy city in ruins.

Kumayl's grave is visited by the multitude of pilgrims ("zayreen") who go for "ziyarat" of Sayyidu Shuhadaa, Imam Husayn (a), and other Shrines of Ae'mmah (a) in Iraq every year.

The Du'a which is known by his name as Du'a-e-Kumayl and read regularly and widely by lovers of the Ahlul Bayt is recited at his grave with emotion and tears. It is one of the important places for "ziyarat" when we go to Iraq and should not be missed. It is located on the outskirts of the city of Najaf near Masjid-e-Kufa. The place is called al- Thawiya. A masjid has been built around the grave of Kumayl where people pray regularly.

SOURCE OF THE DU'A

According to Allamah Majlisi, Kumayl requested Imam 'Ali (a) to teach him a supplication which would give tranquility to his heart. He made this request to the Imam at an assembly in the mosque in Basra where the Imam spoke briefly about the merits of the night of 15th Sha'ban and mentioned the supplication of Prophet Khidr recited on that night.

After the congregation, Kumayl accompanied the Imam in the dark of the night to the place where Imam stayed while he was

in Basra. There the Imam taught him this supplication and asked him to write it down word- by- word and memorize it, as the Imam dictated to him in his melodious and grief-stricken voice.

The Imam mentioned the merits of this supplication and said, "O' Kumayl, take this supplication and recite it on the 15th night of Sha'ban." The Imam added, "Whoever keeps awake and spends the night in prayers and recites this supplication of Prophet Khidr, Allah (swt) will certainly answer his supplication and grant him his wishes."

In addition, the Imam advised him to recite this supplication every Thursday night. If he could not do it every Thursday night, he should make an effort to recite it once a month. If he still could not do that, he should recite it once in a year on the night of the 15th Sha'ban. If that too was not possible, then he should recite it at least once in his lifetime.

This is an indication of the power and force of this supplication that can change the destiny of a believer who recites it with understanding and concentration and with tears naturally flowing down from his eyes on account of the emotionally moving words of the Du'a, especially when it reaches its peak in the last part of the Du'a. It has got miraculous power of changing one's life from the worldly and materially-oriented to the spiritually-oriented life, a life full of tranquility of mind and love for Allah (swt) in one's heart.

MERITS OF THE DU'A

Speaking of the merits of this supplication, Imam 'Ali (a) said, "Allah will protect you from the evil acts of your enemies and plots made against you by evil-minded people." He continued, "Allah will also open the doors of ample sustenance (rizq) for you and forgiveness for all your sins."

Imam 'Ali (a) addressed Kumayl thus, "O' Kumayl, in consideration of your loyalty and close companionship with me, intellect and understanding, I grant you this honor of entrusting this supplication to you." Shaykh Tusi and Sayyid ibn Taus have related this supplication in *Misbah al-Mutahajjad*.

RECITATION OF THE DU'A

Imam 'Ali (a) used to recite the Du'a in "sajdah" which is the lowest position of servitude ("abdiyyat") to Allah (swt) that a person can place himself. This gives us an idea of how the Imam used to be totally absorbed in his "abdiyyat" (Divine servitude) in the presence of Allah (swt) to the point of becoming "fana fil-Llah" (losing completely his self and his identity when exposed to the Glory of Allah (swt)).

We, as Shi'ayane 'Ali, should recite the supplication, at least as advised by the Imam (a) to Kumayl, with knowledge and deeper understanding of the words and with the full presence of mind. This kind of recitation will bring tears in our eyes as we remember with repentance the sins that we committed that fall into the categories mentioned in the Du'a (to be enumerated below) and ask for Divine Mercy and forgiveness of those sins.

As many of us do not understand the Arabic text fully, it is important to have before us a simplified English translation to help us understand at least the outer meaning of the supplication.

If desired, the Du'a can be recited exclusively in English. The importance of reciting it lies in obtaining greater spiritual benefit so as to reform ourselves morally and ethically and raise our spiritual status before Allah (swt).

CONCLUSION

Du'a-e-Kumayl is an extraordinary, unique and powerful Du'a. We need to study it closely to gain an in-depth knowledge of the main concepts contained in it. In conclusion, the Du'a ends with the peak of supplication to Allah (swt), pleading for His boundless Mercy and Magnanimity, as it began with the peak of the prayer asking Allah (swt) by His ten Most Beautiful Names, seeking forgiveness for all the sins, in particular, the six types of gravest sins committed.

The concluding words of the Du'a are most moving. Addressing Allah (swt), the supplicant says, "O', He whose name is a remedy for all ills, whose remembrance provides a sure cure for all sicknesses and whose obedience makes one self-sufficient and independent. Have mercy on him whose asset is hope and whose weapon is lamentation and tears.

O', the best giver who bestows his bounties amply and abundantly and who wards off misfortunes and stops them from coming. O', Light of those who are lost in darkness and bewilderment. O', the All-Knowing who knows everything by Himself, being knowledgeable of all things, Bless Muhammad and his pure progeny, and bestow on me what is worthy of you."

LESSONS TO LEARN

There are several lessons for us to learn from this Du'a:

1. We need to purify and strengthen our belief in "Tawheed", the Oneness of God. Our concept of "Tawheed" needs to be corrected to match with the elementary attributes ("Sifate Dhaat") of Allah (swt).

The purity of belief in "Tawheed" rids "shirk" in all its forms from our minds and inculcates its true concept. We need to be aware of some small forms of "shirk" which are imperceptible. They become manifest in our words and pollute our belief system. We need therefore to get rid of them.

2. Ten attributes have been mentioned that we need to keep in mind all the time to keep our belief system pure and the Divine presence felt all the time. These attributes are: Mercy, Power, Might, Majesty, Grandeur, Authority, Eternity, Divine Names, Knowledge and Light.
3. We need to keep away from at least six types of sins that are mentioned and seek forgiveness of Allah (swt): sins that destroy our defense against committing common sins in our day-to-day lives; sins that make us suffer from calamities; sins that take away Divine fortunes that we enjoy and change them into misfortunes; sins that obstruct Du'as from being accepted; sins that bring about afflictions; sins that cause feeling of despair or hopelessness in receiving the Mercy of Allah (swt).
4. We should seek closeness to and intercession of Allah (swt) through His constant remembrance ("Dhikrul-Llah"), gratitude for His bounties, feeling of His overwhelming awe, submissiveness to all His commandments and prohibitions with utmost humility, and fear of standing before Him on the Day of Judgment to account for our deeds.

5. We should seek forgiveness of Allah (swt) through His Mercy and Compassion for all the sins that we have committed and pray for a feeling of pleasure and contentment for all the beautiful gifts of life that He has through His Grace and benevolence given us.
6. We should pray to Allah (swt) to grant us modesty and humility in all our affairs in life and bless us with excellent morals in our conduct and behavior so as to obtain His closeness and Grace.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER ONE

THE SUBLIME/DYNAMIC OPENING

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَقَالَ رَبُّكُمْ ادْعُونِي أَسْتَجِبْ لَكُمْ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ
يَسْتَكْبِرُونَ عَنْ عِبَادَتِي سَيَدْخُلُونَ جَهَنَّمَ
دَاخِرِينَ

And your Lord has said: Call Me, I will answer you (your supplication); indeed, those who are too arrogant to worship Me, shall soon enter hell, disgraced. (Q: 40:60)

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CHAPTER ONE

THE SUBLIME/DYNAMIC OPENING:

THE BEST/MOST BEAUTIFUL NAMES OF ALLAH (ASMAA'-UL-HUSNA)

Summary of the main themes in the opening passage of the Du'a

"TAWHEED"

The absolute Oneness of God explained lucidly in the form of the supplication which contains, in a nutshell, the description of some of the Divine Qualities of Allah (swt) such as His Singular and Absolute Oneness, Sovereignty, Supremacy, Power, Knowledge, Mercy, Beneficence, Omnipresence, Self-Existence, Self-Subsistence and Ever-Living.

"ASMAA'-UL-HUSNA" (THE BEST AND THE MOST BEAUTIFUL NAMES)

Among the Ten Names out of the total of ninety nine Most Beautiful Names ("Asmaa'-ul-Husna") relating to Divine attributes of Allah (swt) that are mentioned, the most outstanding is the Mercy ("Rahmah") by which Allah (swt) treats His creation. "Rahman" (the Beneficent) and "Rahim" (the Merciful) are the two derivatives of "Rahmah" (the Mercy) used frequently in the Qur'an and generally by Muslims. Therefore, the Ten Names mentioned in the Du'a, in sequence, are as follows:

- ✚ Beneficence ("Rahmah")
- ✚ "Rahman"
- ✚ "Rahim"
- ✚ Power ("Quwwah")
- ✚ Conquer ("Qahr")
- ✚ Might ("Jabarut")
- ✚ Majesty ("Izzah")
- ✚ Grandeur ("Adhamah")
- ✚ Eternity ("Baqaa")
- ✚ Divine Names ("Asmaa")
- ✚ Knowledge ("Ilm")
- ✚ Light ("Noor")
- ✚ Sovereignty ("Sultan") (Not part of "Asmaa'-ul-Husna")

DIVINE MERCY

Man's hope in the Divine Mercy, expressed in utmost humility and heavy heart, regardless of his disobedience in committing grave sins, six of which are mentioned in the supplication.

DUA'-E-KUMAYL

The Supplication of Kumayl

We will now take up for our study the opening passage of the Du'a. It contains 11 short sentences. The words used are powerful and have deep meaning. The translation given is in simple explanatory English. References have been given where required to the original source to enable those who want to study the Du'a in greater detail.

THE TEXT:

Key Attributes: Al-Rahman (Beneficence) Al-Rahim (Merciful)

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent and the
Merciful

اللَّهُمَّ صَلِّ عَلَى مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِ مُحَمَّدٍ

O' Allah, Bless Muhammad and his pure progeny

1 اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْأَلُكَ بِرَحْمَتِكَ الَّتِي
وَسِعَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ،

O' Allah, indeed, I ask you by your boundless Mercy
which encompasses and embraces all things

2 وَبِقُوَّتِكَ الَّتِي قَهَرْتَ بِهَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ،
وَخَضَعَ لَهَا كُلُّ شَيْءٍ، وَذَلَّ لَهَا كُلُّ
شَيْءٍ،

And by your Power and Might by which you have
subdued and dominated all things; everything
submits to you and is humbled before you

3 وَبِجَبَرُوتِكَ الَّتِي غَلَبْتَ بِهَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ،

And by your Irresistible Force by which you have
conquered and dominated all things

4 وَبِعِزَّتِكَ الَّتِي لَا يَقُومُ لَهَا شَيْءٌ،

And by your Glory and Grandeur before which
nothing can withstand

5 وَبِعَظَمَتِكَ الَّتِي مَلَأَتْ كُلَّ شَيْءٍ،

And by your Magnificence and Greatness which
permeates in and pervades over everything

6 وَبِسُلْطَانِكَ الَّذِي عَلَا كُلَّ شَيْءٍ،

And by your Sovereignty and Authority which is
exercised and enforced over everything

7 وَبِوَجْهِكَ الْبَاقِي بَعْدَ فَنَاءِ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ،

And by your Essence which will continue to exist
forever in your Self-Existence after everything has
perished

8 وَبِأَسْمَائِكَ الَّتِي مَلَأَتْ أَرْكَانَ كُلِّ
شَيْءٍ،

And by your Glorious and Excellent Names (Asmaa'-ul-Husna) which manifest your Power that sustains everything

9 وَبِعِلْمِكَ الَّذِي أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ،

And by your Knowledge which encompasses and covers everything

10 وَبِنُورِ وَجْهِكَ الَّذِي أَضَاءَ لَهُ كُلُّ شَيْءٍ،

And by the Light of your appearance (Your Spirit and its Brilliance) which illuminates everything.

11 يَا نُورُ يَا قُدُّوسُ، يَا أَوَّلَ الْأَوَّلِينَ وَيَا آخِرَ الْآخِرِينَ،

You who are the Light, O' You who are the Most Holy, O' You who existed before the First of the first existence, O' You who are the Last of the last existence and continue to exist for ever.

COMMENTARY – VERSES 1 TO 11

“Asmaa'-ul-Husna” - The Best and the Most Beautiful Names of Allah (swt)

The ten Names of Allah (swt) by which the supplication starts are among the famous, ninety nine “Asmaa'-ul-Husna”, the most excellent and the best names of Allah (swt). They provide

the dynamics for the supplicant to move toward Allah (swt). Allah (swt) says, *"And Allah's are the Best Names; therefore call on Him by them ..."* (Q. 7:180). At another place Allah (swt) says, *"And your Lord says: call upon Me. I will answer you ..."* (Q. 40:60)

Shaykh Saduq has quoted Imam 'Ali (a) and Imam Ridha (a), both of whom said, "There are ninety nine Names of God and whoever calls Him by those Names, his Du'a will be answered." The Prophet (s) said, "There are ninety nine Names of Allah, one hundred less one. Whoever keeps their count and memorizes them, he will enter the Paradise." So let us start by analyzing the ten Names with which the supplication begins.

ALLAH

Du'a-e-Kumayl starts with the Original Prime Name which is Allah (swt). This is the proper noun which belongs only to Almighty Allah (swt). There is no equivalent word in English or in any other language.

The word God in English is used for any object of worship. God to a person is any object or person whom he loves, adores, reveres, venerates, glorifies and worships. It can be of a male, a female or a neutral gender. It can also be more than one such gods and goddesses.

Allah in Arabic is the proper name that combines all the exclusive and excellent attributes and is not used for anyone else besides Allah (swt). Allah (swt) is the Ever-Existent; the One who originates and is the source of all existence, who maintains all existence. He is the Creator, the Nourisher and the Accomplisher of the entire creation which will ultimately perish. The sole existence thereafter will be that of Allah (swt) who will continue to exist everlastingly. (Q. 55:26/27)

HOW TO ADDRESS ALLAH

When calling Allah (swt), He is addressed either by using the word of exclamation "Ya" meaning "O" or by using the suffix "Mim" at the end to read "Allahum'ma" meaning "O' Allah". The Qur'an uses "Allahum'ma" in addressing Allah (swt) at several places such as in Chapter 5:114, "Isa, son of God said: 'O' Allah, Our Lord, send down to us from the Heaven a dinner of delicious food (Ma-idah) ...", and in Chapter 3:26, "Say, 'O' Allah, Master of the Kingdom ..."

1. RAHMAH: AR-RAHMAN/AR-RAHIM – THE BENEFICENT/THE MERCIFUL

AL-RAHMAN – THE BENEFICENT

"Al-Rahman" and "Al-Rahim" are derived from the root word "Rahmah," and are two most important attributes of Allah (swt) which remind people of His Mercy that encompasses and embraces everything. These are two coexisting attributes of Allah (swt), each possessing deeper meaning than the other layers of Mercy and have different applications.

"Al-Rahman" is an attribute specifically meant for Allah (swt). None besides Him can be called or referred to as such, while "Rahim" can be used as the name of a person or for his quality of being extremely kind and merciful.

The attribute of "Al-Rahman" for Allah (swt) signifies that He is the ultimate source of all mercy. He is the One whose Mercy is so great and countless that it is beyond the comprehension of anyone and the like of which does not exist.

"AL-RAHIM" – THE MERCIFUL

"Al-Rahim" means all-embracing mercy and compassion. It gives shelter to all who are blessed with it from harm and loss and they get guidance, forgiveness and correct religious belief.

"Al-Rahim" is the one who grants "Rahmah" which is the highest and matchless level of mercy reserved only for believers, largely for the hereafter, while "Rahmaniyyat" is the attribute of all-embracing mercy which extends to all the creation, believers as well as unbelievers, animate as well as inanimate. "He is the One who blesses you with His Mercy...so that He may take you out from the darkness of ignorance and evil into the light of knowledge and righteousness. He is merciful to the believers." (Q. 33:43).

Allah (swt) has blessed us with abundant and countless mercy and favors which we are enjoying continuously in life. He expects us also to be compassionate and merciful to His creation. The Prophet (s) said, "One who does not show compassion and mercy toward the creation of Allah will be deprived of Allah's compassion and mercy." Compassion and mercy toward the servants of Allah (swt) is a sure means of achieving the mercy and compassion from Allah (swt). The Prophet (s) also said, "Be merciful to those on the earth so that those in the heavens may be merciful to you."

2. "AL-QAWIYY"/"AL-MATEEN" – MOST POWERFUL

"Al-Qawiyy" and "Al-Mateen" are two of Allah (swt)'s attributes that share the same basic meaning of absolute and perfect strength, power, might and ability that nothing can stand against it. "Al-Qawiyy" is derived from "quwwah" which is the source of all power and strength; "Al-Mateen" is derived from

the root word "matana" which denotes solidness such as solid rock.

"Al-Qawiyy" signifies the unlimited and the invincible power of Allah (swt) before which the greatness of all the great is completely humbled. "... surely, your Lord is the strong and the Mighty." (Q. 11:66). Everything, be it the greatest of all great mountains in the universe or, indeed, the universe itself with everything contained in it trembles in awe and fear ("khashya") of Allah (swt)'s greatness and power, coupled with His severity.

There are many verses in the Qur'an that state the strength and power of Allah (swt). Among them are: Chapters 2:165; 18:39; 41:15. Besides, the attribute of "Al-Qawiyy" is reiterated in Chapters 8:52 and 40:22. Whatever is willed by Him is immediately done. He needs no helpers, assistants or supporters. His might dominates and subdues everything. Nothing in the heavens or the earth can stand in His way. His Might is eternal and prevails over everything.

3. "AL-QAHHAR" - SUBDUER

"Al-Qahhar" is a noun derived from the root word "qahr" which means taking someone against his will, subduing, humiliating, conquering, overcoming and annihilating him. "Al-Qahhar" is a superlative noun of "al-qahir," one who has subdued and taken the upper hand over all creation. Indeed, Allah (swt) is the One who, by His Might and Power, does what He wills to His creation whether they like it or not. "... and Allah is the master who dominates over His affairs ..." (Q. 12:21)

"Al-Qahhar" is the One whose wrath is unbearable. Nothing can withstand His rage. He humiliates oppressors, breaks the backs of the arrogant and splits the spines of kings and emperors. He is the One beside whose Might all the creation is powerless and

without whose Power all the creation is helpless. There is nothing in existence that can escape from His Might and Power. Everything is helpless in His grip and His realm.

"Al-Qahhar" is the One who imposes His Will over His creation whether they submit willingly or unwillingly. He instills His awe and fear ("khashya") into the hearts of his servants endowed with knowledge and the capacity of getting near to Him. He unveils the truth about Him to the souls of those who love Him. He has restrained the souls of those who worship Him by instilling in their hearts the fear of reckoning.

Allah (swt) has destined death for all beings without exception and the final return to Him. No Prophet, no Messenger, not even Angels who have the special high status of being close to Him, including the Angel of death ("Malakul-Maut"), will eventually escape death. In this way Allah (swt) will manifest "qahr" in His quality of "Al-Qahhar." The One and the only One who is Ever-Living and who Himself is Life ("Al-Hayy") will continue to exist for ever. He Himself will ask, *"To whom does the kingdom belong this day?"* He will answer Himself, *"To Allah, the One, and the only One, the All-Powerful (Lil-Llahil-Wahidil-Qahhar)." (Q. 40:16)*

The guidance that we derive from this Allah (swt)'s attribute of "Al-Qahhar" is that we should apply "jabr" to our "nafs" which exists within us until death. It sits firmly inside us as our internal home-bred enemy that attacks us constantly using the weapons of our sensual desires and evil whispers to get us to commit sinful actions.

We should use all the force ("jabr") that we can put up to strangle and kill it. At the same time we need to turn attention to our external strong enemy who is all the time attacking us

with his huge army of shyateen made up of both Jinn and man to dislodge us from the Right Path and lead us astray. We have our weapon of "Taqwa", God consciousness, to defeat all of them including the internal enemy.

4. "AL-JABBAR"/"JABAROOT" - MIGHTIEST

"Jabaroot" is derived from "al-Jabbar", a superlative adjective derived from the root word of "jabr" which means fixing with force a broken, fractured or crushed object. Another meaning of the word "jabbar" is huge or beyond reach. Still another meaning of the word "jabbar" is the One whose Will governs and subjugates everything. Nothing can happen in His kingdom except what He Wills to happen, whether or not His creatures like it or wish it to happen or resent it to happen. A thing which He does not Will to happen will never happen.

One of the derivatives of "al-jabbar" is "Jabaroot" which means supremacy and greatness that prevails over everything. In one of his statements, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) said, "He (Allah) is the One whose Will manifests itself on the nature or the mindset of hearts." It means that He molded or fashioned the heart according to the level of its capacity or ability of knowing ("ma'rifat") Him. Those who acquire His "ma'rifat" are successful and triumphant. Those who lack His "ma'rifat" are losers in this world and in the hereafter. "Ma'rifat" of Allah (swt) is acquired by efforts.

"Al-Jabbar" signifies application of force in the working of things according to the Will of Allah (swt) as the Creator and Master. This has been the case since the creation of the universe and all that is in it. All objects in the heavens and the earth that are seen and others far beyond our sight and reach, present in the outer horizons of the universe, have been

functioning since their creation exactly according to the Will of Allah (swt). They will all cease functioning and perish when Allah (swt) Wills it at the end of time, at the dawn of "Yaumul Qiyamah."

Man has free will that is limited only to certain domain of his life. He has no control, for example, over the time when Allah (swt) Wills to start and end his life. So is the case with all other creations, animate as well as inanimate. Nobody has any choice in this matter.

5. "AL-'AZIZ" - GLORIOUS/MAJESTIC

The root word of this attribute is "izzat" used in Verse No. 4. Among the various meanings of "izzat" are strength, power, elevation and might. When used as a verb "azzaz", it means to strengthen, to support. The Qur'an uses it in this sense in Chapter 36:14. "... We strengthen them with a third (disciple) ..." As a verb it also means to overcome, to subdue, and to have the upper hand.

"Al-'Aziz" when used for anyone means he commands all the honor, integrity and high respect. Under no circumstances can Allah (swt) ever be humiliated, hurt or harmed. He is always victorious and never vanquished. He is the Mighty, the All-powerful and beyond reach. He has no likeness. He is needless but He is needed by all, all the time. Verily, it is only to the Almighty Allah (swt) that these qualities can, truly, be attributed.

As one of the "Asmaa'-ul-Husna," the Most Beautiful Names of Allah (swt), "Al-'Aziz" appears at several places in the Qur'an where Allah (swt) describes Himself as "Al-Aziz." In Chapter 45:37, He says, "And to Him belongs greatness in the heavens and the earth, and He is the Almighty and the wise." In Chapter

63:8, He says, "... to Allah belongs the honor and to His Prophet and to the believers ..." In Chapter 37:80, He says, "Glory to your Lord, the Lord of Honor and Majesty. He is far above what they ascribe to Him." In Chapter 5:118, Prophet 'Isa appealing to Allah (swt) pleads, "If You punish them, verily, they are Your servants ('ibaaduk) and if You forgive them, surely, You are the Mighty and Wise." In Chapter 38:82, addressing Allah (swt), Iblis says, "... by Your Might, I will surely make them live an evil life, all of them."

6. "AL-'AZEEM" - GRANDEUR

"Al-'Azeem" is a superlative noun derived from the root "'izam" which means greatness, magnanimity, dignity, honor and esteem.

When used for Allah (swt) as His Best Name, "Al-'Azeem" means that He is the Absolute One whose greatness cannot be grasped by vision. His Greatness has no limits. His Greatness is beyond the comprehension of human intellect. Allah (swt) says, *"He is the Most High, the Great"* (Q. 2:255). *"Therefore, glorify the Name of your Lord, the Highest and the Great."* (Q. 56:96)

An example of His Greatness and Might is given in the Qur'an in Chapter 31:28. Allah (swt) says, "Your creation and resurrection is like that of a single soul ..." The creation of the whole universe for Allah (swt) is as easy as the creation of one single soul. The Greatness and Might is manifested in Chapter 16:40 of the Qur'an. Allah (swt) says, "Indeed, when We Will a thing to happen, the only word We say to it is 'Be' and it comes to exist."

Ibn 'Abbas quotes the Prophet (s) as saying, "When a person enters a room to visit a sick person who is on the verge of death and he prays seven times to Allah and says, 'I beg Allah the Great, ('Azeem) Lord of the Great Throne, (Rabbul 'Arshil

'Azeem) to cure you', that sick person will be cured by the Will of Allah."

"Al-'Azeem" implies peak of greatness against which all greatness appear dwarfed and insignificant. Imam Sajjad (a) says, "No words can describe Him. (He is beyond description.) Intellect cannot understand Him. No human mind can comprehend Him. Oppressors and despots fall low in awe of Him. Heads are humbled in fear of Him. All great powers surrender to His Greatness." (Du'a for Monday from Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah)

A prominent wealthy person or a rich chief of a tribe used to be called "'azeem" by the pagans who used to give exclusive importance to wealth and worldly position. The Qur'an quotes them: *"They said: why was this Qur'an not sent down to some great man from the two cities (of Makka and Madina)?"* (Q. 43:31)

In their ignorance, they were unable to appreciate the high intellectual and spiritual level of the Prophet (s) who did not amass worldly possessions and riches. Indeed, this is the case in all ages. A poor man with no money has no place in the society, no matter how wise and intelligent he may be.

The word "'azeem" used in this sense is quite different from "'Azeem", as one of the "Asmaa'-ul-Husna", used for Allah (swt). This Name of Allah (swt) is amply used in the Qur'an and in many Du'as with amazing effect.

7. "AL-BAQI" – ETERNAL

"Al-Baqi" is the noun derived from the root word "al-baqa" which means eternity. "Al-Baqi" also means obedience to Allah (swt), status of Divine goodness and waiting for Allah (swt)'s

rewards. "Al-Baqi", in reality, means Allah (swt)'s ever-enduring existence. Endurance is one of Allah (swt)'s unique characteristic features.

"Al-Baqi" is the One who has ever existed and continues to exist for ever. There is neither a beginning nor an end to His existence. It is an "abadi", "azali", endless, eternal existence. His everlasting existence is necessitated by virtue of His own merits and this attribute covers both of these meanings.

"Al-Baqi" is the One who is above the change of time, indeed, above the concept of time itself. Therefore, the concept of the changing time relating to the "past" and the "future" does not apply to Him. He created time Himself which did not exist before and will cease to exist at the end of time.

Allah (swt)'s existence is based on His own Essence of Self-Existence. The concept of death, cessation of existence does not at all apply to Him. Everything will perish and cease to exist while for Him is "Baqa", the Ever-Lasting existence. The Qur'an contains several verses relating to Allah (swt)'s attribute of "Al-Baqi", the most outstanding of which are, Chapter 55 verses 26 and 27 which say, "All that is on the earth will perish. But the Supreme Being of your glorious Lord will remain and endure forever."

All things in nature will pass away at their appointed time and the only one that will endure forever is the "face" symbolizing the glory, power, majesty, essence and the divine attributes which are associated with the beautiful Names of Allah (swt).

For a believer who remembers this attribute of "Al-Baqi" frequently in his life, Allah (swt) will reveal to him enduring facts of things that will remain and show him things that will perish.

He will be inspired to seek resort of "Al-Baqi", Allah (swt), and His help in all the affairs of his life.

8. "AL-ASMAA'" – THE MOST BEAUTIFUL AND THE EXCELLENT NAMES

In this Du'a, "al-Asmaa'" refers to "Asmaa'-ul-Husna", the Most Beautiful and the Excellent Names of Allah (swt). These Names are the Divine pillars that constitute the supports which sustain everything in existence. They refer to all the ninety nine Names of Allah which make up His attributes.

These attributes are of two kinds. The first kind is the Fundamental Attributes ("Sifat-e-Zaat"). They are the core attributes of Allah (swt) and represent His very Essence. The core attributes are inseparable from Him as they are one and the same as Himself, such as Allah the Living, Allah the Eternal and Allah the Everlasting.

The wonderful way in which the Qur'an has described the Unity of the Divine Essence in the five short verses of Surah 112, al-Ikhlās, is unique. The Chapter says, "He is Allah the One (and the only One), Allah is needless, He is independent (while everything depends on Him and needs Him), He does not beget nor is He begotten (nothing ever comes out or is born of Him, nor Has He come out of anything or has been born of any being). And there is no one like Him (there is no match or equal to Him in any aspect or any sense with regard to His Divine Qualities."

The second kind of attributes are those that are not related to His Essence but represent His Qualities or His Makings ("Sifat-e-Ilahiyyah") such as Allah the Merciful, Allah the Powerful and Allah the Supreme. The majority of these Names relate to His unique qualities and is not what He is in Essence.

This does not mean that they can be shared with anyone. Indeed, it would amount to self-styled "shirk" ("ilhad") and a great sin for anyone to claim that he shares the Divine Attributes. Allah (swt) can, by His Grace, bestow any of these qualities to whomsoever He wishes, but Allah (swt) remains the source and the sole owner of these qualities.

Imam 'Ali (a) addresses Allah (swt) in the following words which have deep meaning relating to the higher level of "Tawheed": "O' He, O' He whom nobody knows what He is, neither how He is, nor in what respect He is, except He Himself Alone, the owner of all Kingdoms and the Possessor of their entire dominion and complete hold and control." (Du'a al-Mashloul)

Imam Sadiq (a) has explained the implications of having incorrect and polluted belief in "Tawheed" against which we should guard ourselves. He said, "Whoever worships God according to his own impression or thoughts is an unbeliever (kafir). Whoever worships the Names (asmaa') without the meaning behind the Names is also an unbeliever (kafir). Whoever worships both the Names and their meanings is a polytheist (mushrik)."

The Imam continues to explain the correct belief that one should have and equates such a believer to a companion of Amir al-Mu'mineen (a). He says, "Whoever worships the meaning behind the Names as expressed by the attributes by which Allah has described Himself, and believes it in his heart and expresses it in words openly and in secret, such a person is a companion of Amir al-Mu'mineen." According to another Hadith, he is a true believer.

According to another Hadith, Imam Sadiq (a) said to Hisham ibn Hakam, "There are ninety nine Names for Allah. If these Names

are interpreted as being one and the same according to what is meant by each of them, it will mean that every Name numerically represents one god. (We will then have ninety nine gods)."

The Imam continued to give the correct interpretation saying, "The correct interpretation of these Names is that they represent the attributes of One Single Absolute Allah." It is very important that we should try to understand this all important concept of the Singleness of the Absolute, All-Supreme, All-Powerful, All-Merciful, All-Sovereign, All-Knowing, Self-Existent, Infinite Allah (swt) to avoid any kind of image, however remote, to creep into our minds.

What we have discussed so far is the ground level of "Asmaa'—ul-Husna", linked to "Tawheed". The higher and deeper levels of "Tawheed" can be studied from the theological and philosophical angles by analyzing in detail the following five main fields:

- a. Allah (swt)'s Divinity ("Uluhiyyat"): It is a state of absolute purity, supreme existence and peak perfection in every aspect. "Uluhiyyat" constitutes a vast field of metaphysical and philosophical elements to be able to get to even the fringes of it. It needs great mind and intellect to explore the vast ocean only to find one is still on the shore.
- b. Allah (swt)'s Oneness ("Ahdaniyyat"): The concept of oneness refers to an all-embracing absolute oneness, beyond all intellectual paradigms and mental images that creep sneakily into our minds. This "Oneness" is not in terms of numerical number but it represents Divine Unity and singleness of Allah (swt), the Unity of

His Essence that embraces all the attributes, "Jami'-e-Sifaat" of Allah (swt).

- c. Allah (swt)'s Uniqueness ("Samadiyyat"): No likeness of Allah (swt) exists in the whole of the universe, or anywhere else. His uniqueness is unique by itself. He is needless and the One sought eternally for help by everyone. He says, *"Call on Me and I will answer Your call"* (Q. 40:60). His existence is needed for everything in the universe and beyond to exist and flourish. Everything depends upon Him for its existence.
- d. Allah (swt)'s Absolute Self-Purity ("Quddusiyyat"): "Al-Quddus" means the One whose characteristics cannot be perceived by the senses, nor can He be conceived by imagination, nor can He be contained by any mind, or understood by logic or reasoning, or comprehended by any intellect. "Al-Quddus" is the One who purifies and protects the souls from sinning. He is not limited by space and time.

Allah (swt)'s "Quddusiyyat", His Absolute purity of self, allows nothing to separate from Him or be born of Him because separation would denote a material state and a measure of the parts. Similarly, He has not separated from anything or born of anything. The concept of separation either way would contradict Allah (swt)'s absolute eternal single unity and would assume the existence of a previous object.

- e. Allah (swt)'s Matchlessness ("Kufu'iyat"): "Kufu" means a match or equal. Allah (swt) is matchless and has no equal. The state of matchlessness negates semblance of all kinds. His pure and single unity allows no imagery of any kind as representing Him. No duality of His pure Self can be imagined or conceived. There is

nothing like Him. He is inimitable, the One and only One in His Self.

9. "AL-'ALEEM" - ALL-KNOWING

"Al-'Aleem" is derived from the word "ilm" which means knowledge. When a person understands correctly the truth which is in accord with reality, he develops a strong belief and conviction. He is then said to possess knowledge of it.

"Al-'Aleem" when used for Allah (swt) means the One who is All-Knowing. His knowledge encompasses everything presently in existence and also in the past before its existence as well as in the future during its continued existence. He is the One whose knowledge is all-inclusive, whether the thing is manifest or hidden, microscopic or mammoth. He knows its beginning and its end and what is above or below it.

"Al-'Aleem" is also the One who has the knowledge of the past, the present and the future. He has the knowledge of the unknown and the knowledge of the Day of Resurrection. He knows what a female has conceived in her womb, all births and deaths taking place, and what every soul earns. He knows the state of mind of people and thoughts that run in their minds, what is hidden in our soul and conscious, and details of everything in existence. Nothing, not even the weight of an atom in the earth or in the heavens, is not in His knowledge.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses which relate to "Al-'Aleem" as All-Knowing. A few examples are: Chapters 36:38; 40:2; 11:5; 2:32; 36:38.

Allah (swt) has made knowledge the core of faith in Islam and the acquisition of knowledge an obligation of every Muslim, man and woman. The Prophet (s) said, "Acquiring knowledge is

an obligation on every Muslim, man and woman. Therefore, seek knowledge from its source and learn it from those who are knowledgeable and worthy of it." He also said, "Knowledge enlivens the dead hearts affected by ignorance, it is the light of the eyes in darkness and the strength of the bodies against weakness."

10. "AL-NOOR" – LIGHT

"Noor" literally means light. Light has several meanings. Light can be physical or spiritual. Physical light illuminates physical things, whereas Spiritual light illuminates the soul.

The source of physical light can be natural such as the sun and the moon or electricity generated physically. The source of spiritual light is the Divine light which illuminates the mind and the intellect and guides it to do the right thing. Spiritual light is also related to the life of the hereafter which will be illuminated by the Divine Light.

The Qur'an contains numerous verses on the subject of light of both this world and of the hereafter. There are more than forty references to light. A few examples can be seen in Chapters 24:35; 5:15; 10:5; 39:69. Some scholars are of the opinion that the attribute of "Al-Noor" is most probably the Greatest Name ("Ism-al-A'zam") of Allah (swt). They say that they cannot see anything in existence without seeing the meaning of this attribute manifested in it.

When used as a common noun, "noor" means light. Light here has also several meanings. One of them is knowledge and scholarship. The mind of a knowledgeable believer can perceive the truth through the light of his knowledge. That is the reason behind Islam laying emphasis on acquiring knowledge and on the learning process. The first Revelation received by the

Prophet (s) consisted of the first five verses of Surah 96, al-'Alaq (the clot), which oriented mankind to the Faculty of Knowledge and learning through the medium of the Pen. The Message to mankind was acquire knowledge and higher knowledge through research into the deeper layers of knowledge that will lead to wisdom.

As one of the "Asmaa'-ul-Husna", "Al-Noor" refers to Allah (swt)'s attribute by which He has manifested Himself fully in all things.

The Name of "Al-Noor" refers to the One who is manifest on His own and who makes everything else clear and visible. He is the Almighty Allah (swt) who has filled the world with light and illuminated the apparent existence through His Manifestation by the creation of the sun and the stars.

In his Du'a of the day of Arafat, Imam Husayn (a) has expressed the attribute of "Al-Noor" in simple words. Addressing Allah (swt), the Imam says, "You are the One who made yourself known to me (introduced Yourself to me) in everything (in Your every creation). And I have seen Your manifestation (Your glory) openly in everything. And You manifest Yourself (you show Your glory) to everything (to Your every creation)."

Allah (swt), through His attribute of Light, has illuminated the spiritual world by sending His Prophet (s) and the Heavenly Book to mankind. He illuminated people endowed with knowledge with the light of His Divine manifestations. He has illuminated the hearts of the truthful through the knowledge of His Unity and the conscious of those who love Him by His support for them. He beautified and brought life to the souls of the pious through His worship. He guides the hearts to choose

what is right. He guides the innermost conscious to whisper to Him in praise of Him.

Allah (swt) gives a beautiful account in the Qur'an by way of a similitude of His "ism" of "Al-Noor" in Chapter 24 verse 35. He says, "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The similitude of His light is a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in the glass, and the glass is as if it were a brightly shining star, lit from a blessed olive tree, neither eastern nor western, the oil of which lights up itself, though fire does not touch it. Light upon Light. Allah guides whomsoever He wishes to His Light. And Allah draws parables for mankind and Allah has knowledge of all things."

The Arabic word "wajh" used in this verse has a wide meaning. It includes cause, countenance, support, appearance, aspect and look. Here it means the light of His Self. The interpretation given by Imam Zainul 'Abidin (a), with reference to Chapter 55, verse 27, is that the countenance is the Ae'mmah-al-Ma'sumeen (a) of the Prophet (s)'s Ahlul Bayt.

SUMMARY

To summarize, the Du'a begins with beseeching Allah (swt) for His Mercy which encompasses everything; His Power which dominates everything; His Might which overwhelms everything; His Majesty which captures everything; His Force which overpowers everything; His Eternity which outlasts everything; His Names which manifest His Glory in everything; His Knowledge which permeates everything; His Light which illuminates everything and His Supreme Authority which He exercises over everything.

INTERCESSION BY THE "ASMAA'" (NAMES)

"And Allah's are the Best and the Most Beautiful Names, therefore call on Him by (asking for the Intercession by) these Names...." (Q. 7:180)

The choice by Imam 'Ali (a) of these ten Names of Allah (swt) points to the power which these Names have in beseeching Allah (swt) for the acceptance of the Du'a. By analyzing these Names in detail, we have seen how powerful they are in seeking intercession for the acceptance of our Du'a.

The amazing and powerful intercession these Names wield can be assessed in the opening part of Du'a-e-Simaat in which the supplicant beseeches Allah (swt) by the intercession of these Names. They have the wonderful power of opening the closed doors of the heavens; removing the narrowness of the doors of the earth and enormously expanding them to make the ways therein accessible; easing difficulties; bringing the dead back to life and raising them from their graves; and removing miseries, hardships and afflictions.

The Du'a continues to beseech Allah (swt) and says, "(O', Allah) by the Majesty of Your Essence, the most Generous and the most Honored, before whom everything bows down in submission; and all heads are lowered in reverence and fear; and all voices are humbled; and all hearts tremble in awe; and by Your Might and Power through which the heavens are held firm so they cannot fall apart or move away from their position and orbits except by your permission;

And I beseech you by Your Will that makes the whole world obey you; and by Your Word (of "be" and it is) that brought into creation the heavens and the earth; and by Your Wisdom that you created wonders in the form of darkness and made it night

and made the night the means of comfort and rest; and You also created light and from it brought out the day; and fixed the time for the day to rise and for people to engage in activities for earning their living;

And by Your Power and Might you created the sun and made it the source of light; and created the moon and lighted it; and created the heavenly bodies in the form of stars and planets as a means of guidance for travelers at night and as adornment for the sky and also as weapons to drive away the evil spirits from eavesdropping in the skies; and made the east and west as the direction for their rising and setting and created for them their orbits in which they float and revolve;

And You clustered the heavenly bodies into beautiful galaxies, shining pulsars and quasars and other luminaries; and fixed for them stations in the heavens; and gave them beautiful shapes; and held them stable by the force of your Beautiful Names (Asmaa'-ul-Husna) and designed a perfect system of stellar and planetary organization; and made them subservient to the changes of night and day; and regulated their timings; and made them a scale for counting years; and made their (the planets and the stars') appearance regular and universal."

INTERCESSION BY THE PROPHET

Besides Allah (swt), by the intercession of His "Asmaa'-ul-Husna," He has with His permission given the right to intercede to the Prophet (s) and his pure progeny, a certain restricted class of people whom He has purified with thorough purification (Q. 33:33). They include Prophet Muhammad (s), al Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), Sayyiditinah Fatemah bint Muhammad (a) and their pure progeny, the "Itrah" al A'emmah-al-Masumeen (a).

CONCLUSION

One of the hidden characteristics of all the Du'as that have originated from our Prophet (s) and our Ae'mmah (a) is the lessons they contain which we need to learn and emulate. The same is the case with Du'a of Prophet Khidr which has come down to us through Amir al- Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a).

The opening chapter of the Du'a teaches us to ponder over the basics of "Tawheed" and the functions of Allah (swt)'s "Asmaa'" (Names). These Names are not just beautiful names for use in our conversation or writing. Each one of them has an intrinsic force of action to perform a certain task of creation, that of control and administration in the realm of the Kingdom ("Mulk/Malakoot") of Allah (swt). This Kingdom extends throughout this universe and beyond, to all the creations that exists and will come to exist as the process of the creation continues incessantly until the Final Hour. It is then that all the creations in existence will perish and the second new level of the creation will come into the existence.

Therefore, we need to study and learn about the basic functions of these "Asmaa'." However, we all suffer from our weaknesses that cause us to commit sins that hinder us from comprehending and gaining "ma'rifat" (enlightenment) of the Divinity and the philosophy of these Names and using them as our intercession. So we need to remove these obstacles in our path by asking for forgiveness from Allah (swt) and stopping to commit these sins again. It is only then that we can begin to derive both spiritual and material gains from these Names.

Amir al-Mu'mineen (a) has mentioned these sins and their effects in this Du'a, which is the subject of our study in the next chapter. We will see how these sins have harmful effects on our lives and cause obstacles and problems for us.

دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER TWO

THE PHYSICS OF SINS

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

ادْعُوا رَبَّكُمْ تَضَرُّعًا وَخُفْيَةً ۚ إِنَّهُ لَا يُحِبُّ
الْمُعْتَدِينَ

Supplicate to your Lord humbly and secretly; indeed, He does
not like the transgressors. (Q: 7:55)

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CHAPTER TWO

THE PHYSICS OF SINS

DEFINITION

In the religious context, sin is an act that violates the commandments of Allah (swt). It can also be considered as any act of disobedience that results in the disconnection of the relation between man as a servant ("abd") and his Creator and Master ("Maula"), Allah (swt). Until the servant repents and seeks forgiveness from his Master, he remains disconnected from Him.

The effect of sinning is that it distances man from his Master, Allah (swt), at the same time as it leaves a black mark or a dark spot on his soul. As long as he remains in that state, he is devoid of the special Mercy of Allah (swt). Sincere repentance washes away the dark spot from the soul. Frequent sinning has the effect of darkening the soul and making it opaque to the ray of light of guidance. Devoid of guidance, man is left in a state of complete darkness and loses his way into spiritual wilderness.

SOURCES OF SINS

"AMMARAH" - THE ENEMY WITHIN

Human beings are inclined to sinning because they are subjected to two enemy forces acting constantly on his mind. The first force is the powerful in-built enemy of "Nafs-e-Ammarah", the evil aspect of the mind that drives them to

commit evil acts. It is ingrained inside us like a wild, untamed, uncontrollable horse ready to knock down any rider who dares to sit on it. The two strong lusts ("shahwatain") on which it rides are the lust for sumptuous food and the lust for sex. Books have been written on this subject showing ways to combat these two lusts.

The second force comes from the outside which can also make inroads into the human mind and strongly influence it to commit a sinful act. It is that of Shaytan Iblis who is constantly tempting man toward committing evil acts. When Shaytan gains complete control over the human mind, man becomes deaf and blind at heart and loses his mental ability to think properly. Consequently, he becomes a perpetual sinner and is lost in the worldly wilderness.

"LAWWAMAH" - THE INSIDE PROTECTIVE FORCE

As mentioned, "Nafs-e-Ammarah" is the force that creates urge within which influences man to commit an evil act. Allah (swt), by His Grace and Compassion, has given man a protective force of "Nafs-e-Lawwamah", the second aspect of man's soul which scorns man and holds in check his urge to commit an evil act.

This second aspect of the human soul has a characteristic feature of self-reproach that prompts man to resist the force of "Ammarah." "Lawwamah" also leads man to repent and turn to Allah (swt) by making amends and pledging not to commit the sin again, thereby restoring the relationship which had temporarily been disconnected owing to disobedience.

Shaytan Iblis – The Enemy Outside

Shaytan Iblis, our second enemy, is the external force that works in two ways. The first method is by sitting on the Right Path and constantly trying to lead us astray from it by fouling our minds and polluting our belief system and practices. The second method is by entering our "Nafs- e-Ammarah" and using it as a medium to make us commit sins.

WARNING

THE QUR'AN

Allah (swt) warns us to be on our guard. When Iblis was accursed and outcast by Allah (swt), he responded, *"O' Lord, as you have abandoned me to go astray, I will certainly make (evil) attractive to them (human beings) on the earth and I will certainly cause them to stray away from the right path"* (Q. 15:39). The Qur'an further says that a very large number of people fall prey and succumb to Shaytan's plotting.

NAHJUL BALAGHA

Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), has added to this warning and said, "Shaytan is your strong and deadly enemy. Take him as such and declare a war against him. Instead of deploying your military forces to fight against people, you should redirect all your forces to fight against him and defeat him." The Imam further added, "You should take lesson from what Allah did to Shaytan. He voided all his (Shaytan's) great acts of worship and his rigorous endeavors of six thousand years (to acquire superior position to that of the Angels) due to a single act of arrogance in disobedience to Allah's Command (of prostrating to Adam). Who can now remain safe from Allah's wrath after Shaytan by committing a similar act of arrogance in disobedience? Nay, Allah, the Glorified, would not let a human

being enter Paradise if he committed the same sin (of being arrogant) for which Allah outcast and expelled an Angel (a generic use of the word to denote Iblis)." (Sermon No.191)

"Kibr", arrogance, is the most detestable sin against Allah (swt). It amounts to breaking into the exclusive domain of Allah (swt) who has declared it to be His sole attribute. Nobody can even touch it, let alone break into it.

DUALISM – POLYTHEISM (SHIRK)

The third source is the wrong and misguided belief system of dualism or polytheism - "shirk" as it is termed in Islam - is the product of the two forces mentioned above acting simultaneously to make us commit the unforgivable and most serious sin. It involves belief in dual or multiple gods or an associate, a companion, a partner or a subordinate who shares jointly with Allah (swt) in His attributes which belong exclusively to Him and which are inseparable from Him.

It may also involve belief in sharing in Allah (swt)'s Creation, His absolute authority over His creation and absolute and independent Rule. It also involves setting up associates of Allah (swt) by worshipping them as gods, semi- gods or superhuman beings having power over nature and human affairs.

Therefore, all our beliefs, intentions, words and actions should be judged by the above-mentioned yardstick. These criteria have been laid down in the Qur'an in various Surahs to determine what constitutes:

"Shirk bil Llah", fi Dhatil-Llah", Shirk in the essence of Allah (swt),

"Shirk fi Asmaa'il-Llah", Shirk in the Names of Allah (swt),

"Shirk fi Af'ali-Llah", Shirk in the actions of Allah (swt),

"Shirk fi Ta'atil-Llah", Shirk in the obedience of Allah (swt) and

"Shirk fi 'Ibadatil-Llah", Shirk in the worship of Allah (swt).

TYPES OF "SHIRK"

There are three types of "shirk" which are all equally condemned in the Qur'an. The first type is called "Shirk al-Jali" which is an open and manifest polytheism forming the belief system of the majority of religions. Only Islam and, in particular, the Shi'a sect can claim total freedom from it.

The second type of "shirk" is called "Shirk al-Khafi" which means hidden or concealed in mind, thought and behavior. Examples of this type of "shirk" are: "Kibr" (arrogance) and "riya'" (show off). "Kibr" is the worst type of "shirk" because "kibr" is the exclusive attribute of Allah (swt) who says, "I will punish most severely anyone who nourishes in his mind kibr". "Riya" involves show-off in any act of worship or charity done to impress people so as to gain respect and reputation.

The third type of "shirk" is called "Shirk al-Akhfa" which means the most concealed "shirk" which resides deep in the hearts, totally invisible and imperceptible. Even the person himself may not be aware of it. The Prophet (s) likened it to a black ant moving on a black stone in the pitch darkness of a black night. The Qur'an gives several examples of this type of "shirk." One of them is to unconsciously thinking in one's heart that the need for which the person prayed to Allah (swt) has been fulfilled by an individual or a deity other than Allah (swt).

It is also reported that the Prophet (s) said, "I am more concerned and fearful about my Ummah falling victim to Shirk al-Khafi in far greater number than Shirk al-Jali." We see this as a universal reality. "Kibr" and "riya", arrogance and show-off,

have always been the two characteristic features of the human society.

UNFORGIVABLE SIN

The Qur'an says, *"Allah does not forgive (anyone) for taking (anyone or anything) as associated with or in partnership with Him. But He forgives whomsoever He pleases for all sins committed by him besides shirk. And whoever associates with or takes as partner anyone or anything with Him (Allah) he has indeed committed a great and most wicked sin"* (Q. 4:48). This is because it amounts to committing treason against Allah (swt) by setting up creatures in rivalry with Him.

FORMS OF "SHIRK"

"Shirk" can take various forms, the most common being excessive devotion, obsession, amounting to almost worshipping a person or a thing. Allah (swt) says, *"Have you seen such a person who takes his god as his lustful desire (hawa')? Allah knowing him such has left him astray and sealed his hearing and his heart and put a thick veil over his sight. Who then, will guide him after Allah has withheld His Grace and Guidance from him; will you not then reflect?"* (Q. 45:23).

The consequences of "hawa", lustful desire, has been mentioned at several places in the Qur'an (2:7; 7:100/102; 10:74; 16:108; 17:46). "Hawa" literally means to fall down to the ground from a height and be blown away by a blast of strong wind and disappear into a far, distant place.

To put it simply, anyone who worships his own passions or lustful desires becomes spiritually deaf and blind. Reason, however strong, cannot prevail upon such a person because all his faculties have been corrupted. He has now become a slave

to his sinful desires. No guidance or advice will affect him after Allah (swt) has withheld His Grace and Guidance and has left him astray.

The gravity of committing this unforgivable sin can be assessed from a parable which Allah (swt) gives in Chapter 22, verse 31. He says, "... if anyone assigns associates or partners to, it is as if he has fallen dead from the sky and his corpse (has been) snatched away by vultures who cannot continue to hold it as a fierce blast of wind comes and carries the corpse away and throws it into a distant place into the bottom of the Hell to burn permanently therein."

TERMINOLOGY OF SIN IN THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an uses various terms which mean sin in a broad sense, but they have different shades of meanings; some are grave sins while others are not so grave. It is difficult to express in English the actual meaning of the various Arabic words. However, we can get some idea of the gravity of the sin in the context of the particular verse of the Qur'an in which it occurs.

APPROXIMATE ENGLISH EQUIVALENT	QUR'ANIC TERMINOLOGY
Mistake, Lapse	"SAYY"
Fault, Error	"KHATA"
Wrongdoing, Crime	"DHANB"
Misdeed, Offense	"ISM"
Aggressive, Blame	"I'TADA"

Transgression, Misdemeanor	"JUNAH"
Unlawful, Forbidden	"HARAM"
Immorality, Viciousness	"FISQ"
Injustice, Oppression	"DHULM"
Disbelief, Faithlessness	"KUFR"
Mischief, Corruption	"FASAD"
Wickedness, Viciousness	"FUJUR"
Arrogance, Insolence	"ASHRAR"

This background to the study of the physics of sin will enable us to understand in a better light the six types of sins mentioned in the Du'a and how they affect us spiritually, blocking our way to our Rabb, the Lord, and disconnecting us from His Special Mercy. The discussion of the different types of sins will begin with Chapter Three.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER THREE

FIRST CATEGORY OF SINS:

SINS THAT TEAR THE VEIL OF DEFENSE OR IMMUNITY AGAINST SINS

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَلَا تُفْسِدُوا فِي الْأَرْضِ بَعْدَ إِصْلَاحِهَا وَادْعُوهُ
خَوْفًا وَطَمَعًا ۚ إِنَّ رَحْمَتَ اللَّهِ قَرِيبٌ مِّنَ
الْمُحْسِنِينَ

And do not cause corruption in the earth after its restoration,
and supplicate to Him with fear (of His wrath) and hope (for His
Mercy); indeed, the mercy of Allah is near to those who are
virtuous and do good (to others).(Q: 7:56)

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CHAPTER THREE

FIRST CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT TEAR THE VEIL OF DEFENSE OR IMMUNITY AGAINST SINS

Before analyzing each category of sin in detail and assessing the degree of their harmful effects on our bodies and souls and considering the question of their forgiveness, let us study the simplified translation of verses 12 to 18 of the Du'a in which Imam 'Ali (a) is seeking forgiveness of these sins.

DU'A-E-KUMAYL – THE TEXT:

Verses 12 to 18

12 اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الدُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَهْتِكُ
 الْعِصَمَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that tear the veil
of immunity against sins

13 اَللّٰهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الدُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُنْزِلُ
 النَّقَمَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that bring down calamity

14 اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُغَيِّرُ
النِّعَمَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that bring about opposite changes in Divine Blessings

15 اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَحْبِسُ
الدُّعَاءَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that block and prevent supplications from reaching You

16 اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تُنْزِلُ
الْبَلَاءَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that bring down misfortunes and afflictions

17 اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي الذُّنُوبَ الَّتِي تَقْطَعُ
الرَّجَاءَ،

O' Allah, forgive those of my sins that cut down and crush my hope in the Divine Mercy

18

اللَّهُمَّ اغْفِرْ لِي كُلَّ ذَنْبٍ أَذْنَبْتُهُ، وَكُلَّ
خَطِيئَةٍ أَخْطَأْتُهَا،

O' Allah, forgive me for all the sins that I have
committed, and for all the wrongdoings that I have
done

CATEGORIES

We can divide these sins into six categories as follows:

Categories of Sins Mentioned in the Du'a:

1. Sins that tear the veil of defense or immunity against sins
2. Sins that bring down hardships, calamities and grief
3. Sins that change Divine favors into Divine disfavor/displeasure
4. Sins that block and prevent supplications from acceptance
5. Sins that bring down misfortunes and afflictions
6. Sins that cut down and crush hope for Divine Mercy.

In addition to the above six categories, Amir al-Mu'mineen has also included all other sins and transgressions committed by the supplicant for which he seeks forgiveness from Allah (swt).

ANALYSIS

We shall now analyze each of the above-mentioned categories of sins briefly and see how they adversely affect our physical and spiritual lives to the extent that they block our way completely to attaining nearness to God.

According to the Book of Ma'ani al-Akhbar (Meanings of Hadith) by Shaykh Saduq, Imam Sajjad (a) is reported to have specified five sins that tear the veil of defense or immunity against sins as follows:

1. Drinking or using intoxicants for intoxication ("Shurbul Khamr")
2. Playing games of chance such as gambling ("La'abu bil-Kimar")
3. Causing laughter by caricaturing or ridiculing people ("Ta'ati ma'a Yuzhikun-Nas minal-Laghvi wal Mizahk")
4. Degrading and humiliating a person by exposing his defects ("Zikru 'Uyubin-Nas")
5. Associating with cynics and skeptics, raising doubts in one's faith ("Mujalasatu Ahlil Raib").

We will discuss briefly the above-mentioned sins.

1. DRINKING OR USING INTOXICANTS ("SHURBUL KHAMR")

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

Intoxication is defined as drinking, eating, smoking, injecting or using in any way intoxicants such as alcohol and drugs of all kinds, liquid or solid, for the purpose of intoxicating a person. The Qur'an describes such an act as outrageous and disgraceful and is among the Devil, Shaytan's handiwork to lead man astray, for it causes a person to lose his decency, dignity and self-respect as a human being. (Q. 2:219; 4:43; 5:90/91)

The prohibition as indicated in these and other verses came in stages to prepare Muslims for the eventual total prohibition, calling it "rijs", "najis", meaning a shameful, detestable and an abhorrent act of Shaytan. All the heavenly religions for which

Prophets were sent prohibited the use of intoxicants to their followers, according to a tradition of Imam Ridha (a).

It is reported that the Prophet (s) used a parable to describe the malaise of indulging in intoxicants, saying that all evils are locked in a room and the key to that room is the use of intoxicants. Liquor is called “*ummul khabais*”, the mother of all vices. Once a man gets intoxicated, he loses his human senses. He becomes brutal. In that state and condition, he can no longer distinguish and differentiate between good and bad, and virtue and vice.

The problem of alcoholism and the abuse of drugs leading to domestic violence and serious crimes including child abuse, rape and murder that we face in our societies today, proves the reality of the Prophet (s)’s Hadith. Furthermore, the Qur’an equates them to idolatry. Imam Sadiq (a) said, “One who is addicted to alcohol will meet the Lord (on the appointed day) as an idol worshipper.”

A chronic alcoholic is a menace to his family and the society at large as he is prone to committing any crime including murder in a state of intoxication. It tears the veil of human dignity, decency and respect which are part of the human nature that Allah (swt) has kept in man, as a veil of defense against sins.

The declaration of its prohibition in the Qur’an was so effective that when the verse was revealed and the message sent out, Arabs who were notoriously addicted to drinking intoxicants were seen emptying all jars of intoxicants they had in their homes by pouring them out into the streets of Madina, soaking its soil with intoxicants of all kinds.

In contrast, the situation today is seen to be exactly the opposite, as alcoholism and the abuse of drugs have become a

social amenity as well as a menace widely prevalent among both the young and the old with multifold increase in juvenile crimes. The prevention of this major cause of crimes, murders and deaths poses a great problem for the human society.

Apart from the social evils of alcoholism, the harms done to the physical and mental health of an alcoholic are incalculable. He ends up with several serious diseases of the liver, the kidney, the lungs, the heart and the brain, impairing the ability to think correctly and affecting mental faculties and the nervous system badly with the loss of "aql", intellect, and human senses which distinguish a man from an animal.

The spiritual harm done by the use of the intoxicants is indicated in a tradition from Imam Sadiq (a) who said, "Indeed, when a person takes only a sip of intoxicant, at that very moment the Angels, the Prophets and the righteous believers curse him and when he drinks enough to intoxicate him, the spirit of belief ("I'man") leaves his body and is replaced by the unclean, accursed and devilish spirit."

Imam Baqir (a) said, "Disobedience to Allah is mostly due to alcoholism. The alcoholic abandons prayers. He even commits incest under the influence of alcohol. He loses his senses."

2. GAMES OF CHANCE/GAMBLING ("LA'ABU BIL-KIMAR")

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

A game of chance is a game played by contestants with the aim of winning. The result of the game is strongly influenced by a device that randomly determines the outcome of the game. Players usually stake money or any object which has monetary value. The winner takes the whole stake. The game can be played on a small scale at home and clubs or on a giant scale

such as jackpots in which millions of dollars are staked and drawn regularly. The turnover runs into billions and trillions annually. Many people develop psychological addiction to these games and will risk their property or prestige to continue with the game.

Common devices used include dice, spinning tops, playing cards, darts, roulette wheels, lottery machines and numbered balls or cards drawn from a container. These devices, in sophisticated forms, are seen at clubs, pubs and casinos. A game of chance may require some skill to play successfully. However, chance generally plays a greater role in determining the outcome than skill. On the other hand, a game of skill such as chess also has some element of chance, however slight, but skill plays a greater role in determining the outcome.

Gambling is any game of chance that involves money or monetary value. Gambling is known and played in nearly all human societies on a smaller or larger scale. Many countries have passed laws restricting it because of the tremendous social and economic harm it causes and the consequent crimes that are committed, over and above suicides that occur daily around the world, especially in cities famous for their large casinos.

In earlier times, people used knucklebones of sheep as dice. In modern times gambling has become a fashionable and sophisticated game played in high society and posh clubs. Gamblers lose money in millions and are reduced to the state of poverty some of whom even go so far as committing suicide to save themselves from disgrace, degradation and disasters in their lives.

THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islam looks at all games of chance including gambling of all kinds with contempt and condemns them as sinful, Devil's (Shaytan's) handiwork and commands believers to stay far away from them. Allah (swt) addresses the believers and says, *"O' you who believe, intoxicants (khamr) and games of chance (mysir), dedications including sacrifices to false deities and idol worshipping (ansab) and pitching by arrows (azlam) and lotteries of all kinds, are the Devil's, Shaytan's disgraceful and unclean handiwork, so keep far away from them, do not go even near them, that you may be successful."* (Q. 5:90)

"Maysir" is derived from the word "yusr" which means ease. A sweepstake is easy money obtained without earning or labor. "Azlam" is a game of chance which is played with stake using all sorts of dices. Chess is included in this definition. "Azlam" is a sort of bet, while "maysir" includes all kinds of gambling. Islam has in clearest and strongest words prohibited and declared all games of chance defined above and all intoxicants as "haram" and "rijz", detestable act of the Devil Shaytan.

The reason for the prohibition of intoxicants is that they degrade and disgrace the person in a state of intoxication, misbehaving in public and private owing to the loss of his senses ("aq'l"), robbing him of his dignity as a man. On the other hand, gambling ultimately reduces a man who loses continuously to a pauper, begging from others, ruining his human dignity. Socially he becomes an outcast as people look at him with derision, and economically he is reduced to a state of poverty. His life is reduced to committing immoral acts and his family life is ruined. Islam wants to see man maintain his human dignity and respect and live a happy and respectable social and family life.

The Qur'an goes further in giving the consequence of drinking and gambling and says, *"The Devil Shaytan wants to cause*

enmity and hatred between you through intoxicants and gambling and keep you away from remembering God and from prayer; would you not then refrain, abstain from them?" (Q. 5:91). Enmity between gamblers is the natural outcome in gambling. The one who loses his money is bound to resent the one who gains and have a feeling of vengeance against him. Gamblers turn out to be enemies of one another and nourish hatred among them.

There are numerous hadith of our A'emmah (a) relating to drinking and gambling. A few of these hadith would suffice to show how our A'emmah (a) condemned these practices. With respect to drinking Imam 'Ali (a) said, *"If a drop of liquor falls into a well and a mosque is built near the well, I will not even say "Azan" (the call for prayer) in that mosque (let alone pray in it). And if a drop of it falls into a sea and the sea later dries up and grass grows in its bed, I will not give that grass to my horse to eat."*

The Prophet (s) said, *"Allah's curse be on liquor and on the person who manufactures it, the person who sells it, the person who buys it, the person who distributes it, the person who drinks it, the person who serves it, the person who uses its income, the person who transports it, and the person who carries it."* He also said, *"Cursed is the one who sits at a table where wine is being served."*

As regards gambling Imam Baqir (a) said, *"All kinds of games of betting constitute gambling and the sale, purchase and use of all the gears and the tools of gambling are forbidden (haram). It is an act that the Devil, the Shaytan prompts you to do."* (Tasfir al-Qummi)

Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have told Abu Basir, his close companion, *"It is haram to sell chess. It is haram to spend the income of this sale. To keep chess board and the articles of play amount to kufr (disbelief). To play chess is equal to ascribing partners to Allah. It is a sin even to salute one who plays chess..."* He also said, *"Do not even approach chess."* (Wasaelush Shi'a/Man la Yahzarul Faqih)

CONCLUSION

Alcohol and games of chance tear the cover of human decency and dignity that all human beings have by nature. They adversely affect the human intellect ("aql"). They constitute disobedience, defiance and rebellion against Allah (swt). They block the path that takes a man nearer to Allah (swt). They are the roots of all evils and are known to bring the downfall of many celebrities. They cause disasters in domestic and family life and are the causes of many crimes and murders.

We see the wisdom behind the commandment of Allah (swt) to keep far away from these two sins termed as "rijs" which is the strongest prohibitory term in the Qur'an. The pathetic sight of a drunkard constantly in the state of intoxication and a chronic gambler begging for money offers a good lesson to mankind against these Satanic vices.

We shall continue in the next chapter with our analysis of the remaining three sins, namely, caricaturing people to cause laughter; degrading and humiliating people by exposing their defects; associating with skeptics and agnostics, causing doubts in one's beliefs, all of which tear the veil of defense or immunity against sins. We shall then proceed further to discuss the other five categories of sins mentioned earlier in the chapter.

دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER FOUR

FIRST CATEGORY OF SINS:

SINS THAT TEAR THE VEIL OF
DEFENSE OR IMMUNITY AGAINST
SINS (CONT'D)

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَإِذَا سَأَلَكَ عِبَادِي عَنِّي فَإِنِّي قَرِيبٌ ۖ أُجِيبُ
دَعْوَةَ الدَّاعِ إِذَا دَعَانِ ۖ فَلْيَسْتَجِيبُوا لِي وَلْيُؤْمِنُوا
بِي لَعَلَّهُمْ يَرْشُدُونَ

And when My servants ask you about Me then (tell them that)
I am Indeed most near; I answer the call of the supplicant
when he calls Me, they should (also) answer My call and have
faith in Me so that they may be guided to the right path. (Q:
2:186)

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CHAPTER FOUR

FIRST CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT TEAR THE VEIL OF DEFENSE OR IMMUNITY AGAINST SINS (CONT'D)

BREACH OF THE ISLAMIC MORAL SYSTEM

We analyzed in detail the first two sins that tear the veil of defense against sins, namely, alcoholism and games of chance, in the previous chapter. We now continue with our analysis of the remaining three types of sins that defy the Commandments of Allah (swt) and infringe on the Islamic Moral system, in addition to tearing the veil of defense against sins in an individual:

1. Caricaturing and ridiculing a person causing laughter ("Ta'ati ma'a Yuzhikun-Nas minal-Laghvi wal Mizahk")
2. Degrading and humiliating a person by exposing his defects ("Zikru 'Uyubin-Nas")
3. Associating with agnostics and skeptics raising doubts in one's faith ("Mujalasatu Ahlil Raib").

CARICATURE/CHARACTER

Assassination/Degradation/Humiliation /laughter ("Ta'ati ma'a Yuzhikun-Nas minal-Laghvi wal Mizahk" and "Zikru 'Uyubin-Nas")

Caricaturing a person means deliberately drawing his picture or describing him by words or imitating physically his certain

striking characteristic features by exaggerating them to create a comic, ludicrous or grotesque image. In other words, it is a deliberate act of degrading and humiliating a person by exposing his defects.

Islam condemns such anti-social behavior and defends human dignity which is an inborn right of every man. Mimicking another person and hurting his feelings are all forbidden and constitute sinful acts. It is a kind of oppression ("dhulm") against a believer.

Adverse speculation about people without any grounds, spreading rumors, mocking them in different ways, spying into their affairs, speaking bad behind their backs which is equated to eating the flesh of the dead, all these hurt their reputation, lower their self-respect, social status and human dignity.

Three such actions are condemned in the strongest possible words in the Qur'an. In Chapter 104, verses 1 to 7, Allah (swt) says, "Wail, woe (a deep dark pit of painful punishment in the Hell) is unto every slanderer, defamer who accumulates wealth and hoards it. Does he think that his wealth will make him live forever?"

First, Islam condemns making up rumors, prying into the lives of others, defaming, and talking deridingly about a person by word of mouth or by innuendo, and by behaving disrespectfully or sarcastically or insultingly. The condemnation is because these actions trample upon basic human rights, specifically, the security of one's honor and dignity, and the protection of one's integrity of character and personality as is emphasized by Islam.

Second, Islam also condemns mocking and mimicking peoples' character behind their backs, even if things spoken are true but the motive is bad as it amounts to character assassination. In

Islamic terminology it is called “ghibah” which means backbiting. It constitutes a grave sin which can only be forgiven by the victim whose character has been assassinated. It is a violation of human right of the protection of one’s privacy and deficiencies from exposure to the public.

Third, Islam also condemns piling up wealth, not for use or for the service of those who need it, but for miserly hoard thinking that his wealth will last forever, ignoring the fact that he is going to die and leave all that mass of wealth behind. The question raised in the above verse is a warning against piling up wealth that has no use to anyone, especially to those who need it. Miserliness is the disease of the heart and is a great sin punishable severely in the hereafter.

CAUSES OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR

The Qur’an mentions some of these anti-social practices at many places, particularly in Chapter 104 verses 1 to 7 cited above.

A: SPREADING RUMORS

One of the major sins is making up rumors, spreading them and lying about the character of others. It is such a serious act that it can put the lives of people in danger. It becomes most serious when it strips off one’s honor and dignity, damaging greatly one’s social, economic and political life within the society.

In Chapter 49 verses 11/12, (swt) addresses the believers, “O’ you who believe, do not let men of one group make fun of another group of men, perhaps the latter may be better than the former group. Also do not, likewise, let women make fun of other women, for it may perhaps be that the latter may be better than the former group. Do not find faults in yourselves

and do not defame one another by using bad nick names Surely, these are the people who are the oppressors."

B: NICKNAMING/MOCKING

It is also forbidden for Muslims to make fun of or mock one another by giving them nicknames which are derogatory to their status and dignity, thereby hurting their feeling. The Qur'an calls such people oppressors and defamers who throw mud on the dignity of one another and make them look small and insignificant.

C: INQUISITIVENESS/SPYING

Generally speaking, when we think why some inquisitive people get into the bad habit of looking into the secrets of other people, we find that the underlying cause is suspicion and distrust of others. The Qur'an warns, *"O' you who believe, avoid too much suspicions, indeed, suspicion in some cases is a sin, and do not be inquisitive about the secrets of others and do not let some of you backbite others ..."* (Q. 49:12) So we see from this verse that suspicion leads to prying into the secrets of people which, in turn, leads to divulging them behind their backs.

Islam has provided four types of security for believers -- security of life, security of property, security of honor and dignity, and security against unwarranted suspicion. Snooping into the lives of others violates the security provided by Islam and amounts to committing a great sin. The consequence is that it leads to divulging secrets and causing irreparable damage to one's dignity and status within the society. There are many Hadith of the Prophet (s) and Ae'mmah (a) which condemn prying into other's secrets and publicizing them to dishonor individuals concerned.

Addressing the people, the Prophet (s) is reported to have said, "O' people, a person who merely gives lip service to Islam but does not have true faith in his heart should not denigrate other Muslims and should not look for shortcomings in others or probe into their private affairs." (Shaykh Saduq, Thawabal A'maal)

Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have said, "The farthest that a person can get from Allah is when he befriends another person with the bad intention of knowing his shortcomings and weaknesses so that he can one day publicize and dishonor him" (Al-Kafi, Vol. 2). The gravity of this sin can be seen from the spiritual harm that results from the person being thrown far away from the proximity of Allah (swt).

CAUSES OF BAD MORALS

When we look deeply into the reasons why people commit such acts, we find three main reasons that cause people to act in this manner in spite of the Divine prohibition. First is superiority complex, a psychological syndrome which the person exhibits. Second is jealousy that the man nourishes in his heart for lacking the merits which another person possesses. Third is enjoyment that the person derives in assassinating the character of other people and making fun of them either to inflate their own ego or, due to their inferiority complex, to compensate for their deficiencies.

A. SUPERIORITY COMPLEX/PRIDE ("KIBR")

Superiority Complex, pride or "kibr" in the religious terminology, has been mentioned in the previous chapter. We shall now analyze this factor in greater detail to get the insight into why people feel themselves superior and treat others as inferior to them to satisfy their ego in defiance of the tradition

that says, "Do not consider any of the Muslims as being insignificant or inferior since in the eyes of Allah (that person whom you consider as inferior or insignificant) actually has a high rank."

DEFINITION

Pride or "kibr" is a psychic state of mind in which a person feels a sense of superiority and behaves arrogantly with others. This mental feeling of superiority or arrogance is reflected in the behavior and speech of the person. He manifests self-admiration and self-love and treats others high-handedly. Precise definition of "kibr" cannot be given owing to "kibr" being an inner, hidden and psychic state of mind.

Levels and Kinds of "Kibr"

There are six kinds of "kibr." It can arise because of:

1. Having true faith and belief on account of which the believer feels proud of himself
2. Believing in false doctrines considering them as valid and true beliefs
3. Possessing good qualities and excellent, praiseworthy ethical attributes commanding respect
4. Exhibiting immoral qualities and nasty behavior giving rise to false impression of feeling great
5. Feeling of doing righteous deeds and being admired for these philanthropic and devotional acts
6. Doing sinful and wicked, shameful deeds and becoming dishonorable in society which produces a feeling of being extraordinary.

The above-mentioned are the inner feelings arising out of pride.

There are also outer factors that give rise to pride, such as family dignity, noble ancestry, economic wealth, social standing, high political position, reputation of possessing a wide-ranging, deep scholarly knowledge and considering himself as a dignified person and treating manual work or any other low-class work as below his dignity. Sometimes the traces of pride are so subtle that the person who suffers from this disease does not know that his actions indicate the presence of “kibr” in his character.

There are also several other indirect types of “kibr” such as deliberate defiance of the commandments of Allah (swt), defiance of Allah (swt)’s authority and false claims of Divinity or any one or more of the exclusive Divine Attributes (“Asmaa’-ul-Husna”). Possession of knowledge and expertise in various branches of religious and physical sciences and technologies can give rise to a sense of pride and arrogance. Such persons have a tendency of looking down on others and treating them disrespectfully. It is strange that even bad and immoral persons also look down on others haughtily because they consider their vicious characteristics to be commendable.

We also see some rich people, great scholars and those who occupy high positions tend to conceal their pride cleverly so as not to be seen as proud but, as pride has its roots in the heart, it manifests ostensibly in their behavior. Such people cannot help but exhibit their pride and self- importance in social gatherings by associating with people of their status and avoiding the company of poor people. Pride also finds its expression among people of high standing in turning their back on others and among religious scholars and devotees in their frowns and scornful looks at others.

All kinds of “kibr” stem from the false notion that the person feels in his heart that he possesses some kind of excellence or worth which makes him superior to others. As a result, he harbors a feeling of high self-esteem in his heart which manifests itself in his conduct. Islam condemns all kinds of “kibr” or pride and arrogance. They constitute an offense to the Power and sole Authority of Allah (swt). Man tends to forget that all they possess, be it knowledge, wealth, power, status, respect, is from Allah (swt) who is the source of all goodness.

All these sources of pride are detestable and constitute an outrage against Allah (swt). It is a major sin that tears the veil of defense against sins and severest punishment awaits the person who commits this sin. Allah (swt) has declared “Kibriyaa” as His exclusive and sacrosanct veil and warned man not to go to its vicinity, let alone touch it as it would burn him to ashes. The Prophet (s) is reported to have said, “Never and absolutely never can a person enter the Paradise who has the slightest spot of pride inside his heart.” (Usul al-Kafi)

In his last will, Imam Sadiq (a) said, “Renounce and be far away from pride and self-praise, since pride is Allah Almighty’s robe and a person who competes with Allah by putting on His robe, Allah will crush him and disgrace him totally on the Day of Resurrection.” (Tuhaf-al-Uqoul)

Pride is the cause of incalculable social and spiritual harm. It prevents man from rising socially and spiritually because it generates hatred and rancor in human hearts, disgraces man in the eyes of his fellow human beings, and brings about insult and humiliation for him and a tendency for people to retaliate against him.

It is reported that Imam Sadiq (a) said, "There is no person who does not have a burden, a bondage carried on his head and an angel who supervises it. Whenever he is proud, the angel says to him, 'Be humble, lest God should disgrace you.' The man feels himself great in his own eyes while in other people's eyes, he looks small. However, when he becomes humble and modest, Allah removes the bondage from his head and the angel says to him, 'Elevate yourself as Allah, the Almighty, is elevating you.' He then sees himself small in his own eyes, while he is seen as great in the eyes of others." (Al-Kulayni, Usul al-Kafi)

Pride, arrogance ("kibr") is the greatest of all sins besides "shirk" that tears the veil of immunity or defense against sins.

B.ENVY ("HASAD")

DEFINITION

Envy is defined as bitterness or resentment caused in one person against another who has something such as talent, merit, quality or possession which one does not have but desires to have it for oneself only, or one may not even be able to have it but the other person should not have it either. In other words, not only is the envious person unhappy for lacking the quality himself but also wishes to inflict misfortune on the other person who has it.

JEALOUSY

Envy and jealousy are often used interchangeably in common usage but strictly speaking the two words express two distinct emotions. Jealousy is the fear of losing someone or something that the person is attached to or possesses to another person. A typical example is losing a woman one loves to another

person due to one reason or another. Envy, on the other hand, is the resentment or bitterness caused in a person who does not have and perhaps cannot even have something such as material wealth or a high reputation which another person possesses or enjoys.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

In Islam envy/jealousy ("hasad") is one of the greatest sins that tears the veil of immunity or defense in a person against sins. Envy is a powerful negative emotion and, when its intensity turns it into anger, it can bring about disastrous effects to the extent that a person may commit murder. The Qur'an contains a Chapter (113:5) in which in one of its verses, No.5, Allah (swt)'s Protection is sought against the evils of the envious person.

TYPES OF ENVY

There are various types and levels of envy. They include possession of such qualities as intellectual talents, spiritual heights, excellent morals, good humanitarian deeds, material wealth, and social/political prestige, any or all of which can give rise to various levels of envy among those who lack them. Other types include enmity in the heart of the envious, feeling of inferiority, sense of superiority, pride ("kibr"), and sometimes even fear of an obstacle being put by another person in a position of advantage that prevents him from rising or obtaining the position for which he aspires.

There are two types of envy, namely, malicious and benign. Malicious is the negative type which is dangerous and capable of causing great harm to the extent of murder of the person

who is envied. Benign is the positive type which is beneficial and acts as motivational force for a higher level of achievement.

CAUSES OF ENVY

Some Shi'a scholars such as Allamah Majlisi have given the following seven causes of envy:

1. Enmity, animosity, hatred, rancor, all of which can cause great harm
2. Superiority Complex - sense of greatness against the person who enjoys higher scholarship, merits, status, or greater wealth and/or social/political advantages
3. Pride (kibr) which due to a person's envy makes him treat arrogantly another who has obtained merit or favor
4. Fear of obstacles being put against a person by another in a position of advantage to prevent him from rising or obtaining the position for which the person aspires
5. Desire to exercise and preserve sole authority over others so as to prevent any other person from sharing in his authority and advantages
6. Wickedness in a person's character that causes envy against persons who have good character and do good deeds
7. Inferiority Complex – sense of inadequacy, doubt and uncertainty, a feeling of not measuring up to what the other person possesses in intellect or achievement.

EVIL EFFECTS OF ENVY

Envy is one of the deadliest diseases of the heart. It destroys faith and reduces man to a burnt-up mental state in the same way as fire burns up wood. The heart is afflicted with grief and

depression, the chest gets suffocated and the face frowns and turns grim. The light of faith is dimmed and is eventually extinguished. The malicious effect is manifested in the inner and outer personality of a man who shows his resentment even against God as he is displeased with what He has given him and uses disrespectful words against Him.

There are many Hadith from our Ae'mmah (a) on this subject. One outstanding Hadith has been quoted by Muhammad ibn Ya'qub al-Kulayni in Usul al-Kafi in which Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have said, "The Prophet said that Allah addressed Prophet Musa, 'O' son of 'Imran never be envious of people about the favors I have bestowed on them by My grace, do not frown at them and do not yield to your envious self. Indeed the envious man is indignant at the bestowal of My favor and contests My apportionment of gifts among my creatures. Such a man neither belongs to Me nor do I belong to him.'"

The above-mentioned Hadith should serve as a deterrent to all of us not only not to feel envious but, on the contrary, to feel joyous for the favors that Allah (swt) bestows on his servant ("abd"), irrespective of whether he is a believer or a non-believer. To feel jealous of such a person is the gravest sin against Allah (swt) and amounts to being displeased with His actions and disbelieving in His "Tawheed fil Af'aal." It is therefore not surprising that according to this Hadith, Allah (swt) disowns him and ousts him from His Domain ("Malakiyyat").

C. PERSONAL ENJOYMENT

There are certain people of both genders in the society who derive personal pleasure, per se, at the expense of damaging the reputation and image of others whom they do not like by

making fun of them, mimicking them and disgracing them without any rhyme or reason, just because they feel jealous about them.

They do this merely to entertain themselves, satisfy their ego, feel falsely great about themselves or cover up their weaknesses and wickedness in defiance of Verse 1 of Chapter 104 in the Qur'an, which curses people who slander others to cause contempt in the public eye. These people make up the bad elements of the society as they bring about great harm by damaging the public morality of the society as a whole.

A.BACKBITING ("GHIBAH")

Backbiting ("ghibah") is another great and foremost sin that tears the veil of defense or immunity against sins. Therefore, we need to discuss and analyze it in some detail to get the insight into what it is and what moral and spiritual harms it causes to the backbiter and also what bad effects it brings to the society in general.

DEFINITION

A simple dictionary definition of backbiting is to attack the character or reputation, or to speak critically or slanderously of a person in his absence. The word "ghibah" is a verbal noun originating from "ghaibah" which means saying such things about a person when he is not present that would pain him if he hears them. If what has been said is true it is "ghibah", and if it is false it is "buhtan" (slander).

SCHOLARS HAVE GIVEN TWO DEFINITIONS OF "GHIBAH":

The first definition which is popular among scholars is, "It (ghibah) is what is said unfavorably of a person in his absence which he would detest when he hears it and it is spoken with the intention of harming his character and damaging his reputation and belittling him before others." Obviously, this definition restricts backbiting to speech only.

The second definition has wider application and covers, in addition to speech, all forms of writing, narrations and other modes of communication. The difference between the two definitions arises in the interpretation of the word "dhikr" used in the Arabic definition given in *Kash al-Ribah*, and *Ahkam al-Ghibah* by al-Shahid al-Thani. But if "dhikr" were taken to mean wider than oral speech, as it literally signifies, the two definitions become similar.

When asked by Abu Dharr, the Prophet (s) defined "ghibah" as, "to speak about your brother (in-faith) that which he dislikes." Further, when asked if what was spoken about him was actually true, the Prophet replied, "Know that, when you speak what is true about him, you have committed his ghibah, while if what you speak about him is not true, you have committed slander against him." (Shaykh al-Tusi, 'Amali)

The wider application of the definition of "ghibah" that covers all kinds of communication can be confirmed by the following Hadith narrated by 'Aishah who says, "A woman came to visit us, and when she turned to leave, I made a sign by my hand to show that she is short in height. Immediately the Prophet (s) said to me, 'You have committed her ghibah.'" (al-Naraq, Jami' al- Sa'adah)

In fact, there are many traditions relating to the definition of "ghibah" that do not limit the meaning of it to the spoken word.

The definition that restricts it is because, according to the common usage of the word, “ghibah” is generally committed in speech. It should also be noted that in accordance with many traditions, it is forbidden (“haram”) to reveal the secrets of your brother in-faith, in speech or otherwise, to divulge and uncover his concealed defects, regardless of whether it is physical, moral or behavioral in nature and whether or not it is with malicious intention.

CAUSES OF “GHIBAH”

There are several causes of people backbiting one another of which the main ones can be summarized as follows:

1. Urge for revenge to obtain gratification from one’s anger against another person for his unfavorable past behavior
2. Peer pressure that makes a person succumb to his desire to fit in and be accepted by his companions who have a habit of backbiting
3. Desire to elevate oneself by degrading another person before others and making himself look great before them
4. Jealousy in the mind of a person when he hears another person being praised and therefore seeks to disparage him
5. Desire to make people laugh by making jokes about a person in his absence in a disrespectful manner, making him a laughing stock before others. Some people make a living out of this practice.
6. Means of seeking release or letting go of anger or emotion against a person after a confrontation with him

7. Divert blame to the aspirant of a position and establish control in the hierarchy of the power structure to maintain dominance.

THE ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

There are several verses in the Qur'an which condemn backbiting strongly. The prominent verse is Chapter 49, verse 12 in which (swt) says, "... nor let some of you backbite others. Does one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Yet you abhor it ..." We need to understand the fact that our deeds will assume different shapes in accordance with their nature ("Mujjasma-e-A'amal") in the hereafter.

According to various traditions relating to backbiting, it is reported that a backbiter who tears other people's honor and respect to shreds in this world and eats their moral flesh will take a shape of a ferocious dog eating the flesh of dead bodies, or eating his own flesh or appearing as a dead body that is eaten up by hounds. It is reported by Shaykh Saduq in 'Amali that Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), is reported to have said to Nawf al-Bakali, "Abstain from ghibah, for it is the food of the dogs of Hell-Fire." Then he added, "O' Nawf, untrue is the one who claims to be of legitimate birth and yet eats the flesh of the people through backbiting."

In another tradition the Prophet (s) is reported to have said, "One who takes up the practice of doing ghibah of his brother in faith and discloses his defects, the first step that he will take (when he is resurrected) will be into the Hell and Allah will disclose his defects in front of all his creations." At another place the Prophet (s) said, "No fire is faster in burning away dry wood than ghibah in burning out the person's virtues."

With reference to the above-mentioned Hadith, the Prophet (s) said, "A person will be given his Book (of his actions) in front of Allah on the Day of Resurrection. On seeing his good deeds not recorded in his Book he will complain, 'O', this is not my Book. I do not see my virtuous deeds recorded in it.' He will be told, 'This is surely your Book. Your Lord does not commit an error nor does He forget. Your good deeds have been deleted from your Book and transferred to the Book of the persons you have backbitten.'

Another person will then be brought up and given his Book. He will see many good deeds he performed in obedience to Allah and he will exclaim, 'O' Allah this is not my Book. I did not perform these good deeds in obedience to you.' He will be told, 'These good deeds have been transferred from the Book of the persons who have done your ghibah and so they have been awarded to you'

Shaykh Saduq reports that Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Whoever commits "ghibah" and exposes the sins of a person (who knows and admits in his heart that he is a sinner but conceals his sin before others in his outside conduct) will be expelled from the wilayah (domain) of Allah and get into the wilayah (domain) of Shaytan" (Allamah Majlisi, Bihar al-Anwar). Obviously, the fate of such a person is similar to that of the Shaytan.

"Ghibah" constitutes violation of the rights of God ("huququ-ul-Llah") as well as of humans ("huququ-un-Nnas"). Allah (swt) may forgive the backbiter as far as His right is concerned provided he sincerely repents, but the backbiter will need to obtain the forgiveness of the victim which is not easy to obtain because "ghibah" is behind-the-back insult, humiliation, disparagement and defamation of a believer.

Imam Sadiq (s) is reported to have said, "One who reports every undesirable thing he has seen and heard himself about a believer behind his back belongs to those about whom Allah says, 'There is grievous punishment for those who like to publicize defects and deficiencies of the believers.'" (Shaykh Saduq, 'Iqab al-'Aamal)

LISTENING TO "GHIBAH"

In the same way as "ghibah" is prohibited, so is listening to it. Both happen simultaneously, the speaker speaking on the one hand and the listener listening on the other. According to several traditions, both are equally condemned. The Prophet (s) said, "The listener is one of the two backbiters." In a similar tradition Imam 'Ali (a) said, "The listener is one of the two who engage in backbiting (Ghurar al-Hikam)." It is necessary therefore to keep away from listening to "ghibah" in order to avoid committing that sin. Not only is it essential to avoid listening, but according to many traditions, it is also obligatory to refute "ghibah."

In a tradition reported by Shaykh Saduq from Imam Sadiq (a) the Prophet (s) said, "Whoever does a favor to his brother by refuting his ghibah on hearing it in a gathering, Allah will save him from a thousand kinds of evils in this world and in the hereafter. But if he does not refute it in spite of his ability to do so, he will carry the burden of committing ghibah of that person seventy times." (Wasail al-Shi'ah)

There are also several concealed and figurative ways to listen piously or even silently to "ghibah" to encourage the backbiter to say still more which our great scholars and researchers such as al Shaykh al-Ansari and Shahid Thani have discussed in their discourses. The ruling factor in all cases is the malicious

intention of the person which is only known to the person himself irrespective of the figure of speech he uses to backbite or the method he adopts to listen to it.

EFFECTS OF "GHIBAH"

SOCIAL/MORAL HARMS

Backbiting has numerous harmful effects both socially and morally.

First, "ghibah" basically lowers the status of the backbiter in the eyes of people as a man of bad morals and malicious mind. People by nature love virtue and goodness and hate baseness and bad heart. Accordingly, they differentiate between good people who avoid divulging hidden defects and deficiencies and bad people who tear the veil of honor and respect of people in general. Even the backbiter, by virtue of his innate moral nature, himself realizes the effects of his action and regards the person who refrains from doing "ghibah" as superior to him. Allah (swt) will disgrace forever the person who is engaged in this vile practice in this world and severely punish him in the hereafter.

Second, when the practice of backbiting becomes common in the society, the effects assume dangerous levels as disunity and conflicts are created within that society. Generally speaking, the society which is contaminated with this mental illness will never mature in humanity. There will be a lack of human values that bind the society together. Compassion will give way to hatred and enmity among people.

Third, people will cease to have confidence and trust among themselves as their defects and deficiencies are openly talked about. The veil that conceals private acts and deeds is torn and

people are ashamed to show their faces in public and goodness in the society as a whole is destroyed.

Fourth, backbiting naturally causes hatred and enmity. A person whose secrets has been made public and has been robbed of his self respect and dignity is likely to resort to violence as a means of revenge against the backbiter. In such circumstances, crimes will become rampant creating havoc in the society.

Fifth, many people refrain from committing sins and other bad actions in private owing to fear of losing respect and honor in case they become known to the public. In this way, it serves as a deterrent to committing sins and bad actions.

Sixth and lastly, people sin in private in view of the veil of secrecy that covers them from the public gaze. If the veil is torn open and the sins of the person are exposed before the public, his character and dignity will be ruined, so he will cease to commit the sin in private. He now commits the sin in the open as the advantage that existed previously has been quashed. It makes no difference to him now whether the act is committed in private or public.

When it becomes a social norm and every one openly indulges in sinful acts, the moral fabric of the society will be torn to shreds. The condition of human beings will go down to lower than that of animals. Consequently, the Divine punishment will descend upon the society and wipe it out completely from the surface of the earth as happened in the ancient history of mankind.

The best example is that of the people of Prophet Lut. The story is too well-known to need any detailed mention here. Suffice it to state that a gigantic landslide overturned the entire piece of

land where the people lived and buried them in it. Stones rained from the sky for days and covered the earth with layers over layers of stones.

SPIRITUAL HARM

Spiritually, the act of damaging the reputation of believers by divulging their concealed defects condemns the man to a painful life in the hereafter. However, when this act becomes a part of a man's nature, in other words, he becomes a chronic backbiter, his spiritual heart dies and his soul is completely blackened becoming opaque to such an extent that not a single ray of light of guidance can penetrate it.

The Qur'an refers to the condition of such people in Chapter 83, verses 14 to 17. "No indeed! Rather their hearts have been over stained by what they have been earning (by what they were doing). No indeed! They will be veiled and shut off from (the Light) of their Lord on that day. Then they will indeed enter the Hell-Fire, then they will be told, 'This is (the reality) of what you used to deny (reject it as false).'"

The heart of man, as created by Allah (swt), is pure and untainted. Every time a man commits a crime, it creates a stain of rust on his heart. When such stains accumulate without being removed by repentance and forgiveness, they deepen and cover the whole heart which is then sealed. Eventually, the man dies a spiritual death. He becomes unmindful and commits all kinds of vices. Furthermore, he becomes insensitive and mocks the Truth and ridicules the believers.

The stains of the evil deeds darken the mirror of their hearts and prevent the light of guidance from entering and, on the Day of Judgment, veils will fall on the eyes of the sinful so they

cannot see the Glory of their Lord , the joy of which the righteous people will enjoy. The Fire of Hell will be the only reality that they will perceive.

JUST SOCIETY – THE GOAL

The main objective of the teachings and the actions of all the Prophets of God have been the formation of a just society, unity in all important matters of life and resistance to injustices, aggressions and oppressions which cause the corruption of humanity and ruin the foundations of a wholesome human society. All their efforts have revolved around this central and rational divine goal. This cannot be achieved except with the unity, solidarity, mutual love and brotherhood among members of the society and with the sincerity of their hearts and the purity of their inner self.

The Prophet of Islam (s) warned, "The disaster brought about by ghibah on the believer's faith gets hold of him more rapidly than the disease of aklah affecting the side of his body." Allamah Majlisi explains the disease of "aklah" as an affliction of an organ of the body that consumes and destroys it. In a spiritual sense, it means that "ghibah" consumes the faith of a man rapidly and destroys it.

In another Hadith, the Prophet (s) has also said, "To sit in a mosque waiting for the time of the prayer is a form of worship, so long as one does not commit ghibah." Therefore, "ghibah" turns the period of waiting into a more serious sin as it is committed inside the mosque.

The Prophet (s) established the covenant of brotherhood among the early companions when they migrated to Madina (the Muhajirin and the Ansar) and the relationship of

brotherhood prevailed among all Muslims on the basis of the Qur'anic command of "Indeed, all the believers are brothers. So, reconcile and make peace among your brothers ..." (49:10)

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "It is the duty of all Muslims to strive in respect of mutual relations, cooperation, kindness and charity to the needy, and joint affection among themselves and merciful to one another as commanded by Allah who said, 'They (Muslims) are merciful to one another.'" (Al-Kafi)

*C. ASSOCIATING WITH AGNOSTICS AND
SKEPTICS ("MUJALASATU AHLIL RAIB")*

AGNOSTICS

The sixth and the last sin that tears the veil of immunity against sins is associating with agnostics and skeptics. A simple definition and analysis of these two types of people gives us some reasons as to why and how association with them damages the immunity we have against sins as we come under their direct or indirect influence.

An agnostic is a person who believes in accordance with the logic of his mind that the existence of God is not provable by the six senses of perception. His logic is so staunchly entrenched in his mind that in spite of the overwhelming evidence seen in the countless miracles of creation and the uniformity of the design manifest in the creation, the agnostic is not even prepared to consider the reality of the existence of the creator. Therefore, an agnostic is so convinced of his misdirected logic that he tries to confound his mind and of his associates by his metaphysical and mystical questions which cannot be answered by common sense.

SKEPTICS

On the other hand, a skeptic is one who instinctively or habitually doubts, questions or disagrees with generally accepted principles and doctrines relating to religious beliefs and practices. He questions the validity, authenticity or truth of some or all religious tenets.

Usually, he raises questions of distorted facts that appear convincing but are in fact misleading. Sometimes, he would quote something that had been misreported but he would claim and believe it to be true, in spite of not being able to support it. He himself would be confused and would confuse his associates as well.

INFLUENCE OF AGNOSTICS AND SKEPTICS

People are normally influenced by their companions to a lesser or greater degree depending upon their intellect. More often than not, even those with intellect are influenced by the misdirected logic of the agnostics. Therefore, the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet (s) and the Ae'mmah (a) advise believers to keep away from the company of sinners, wrongdoers and those who nourish doubts about the established doctrines of religion and question their validity. The purpose is to avoid harmful influences which are likely to affect their beliefs and practices. This would result in the loss of their veil of immunity against sins and Allah (swt)'s Mercy on them.

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "It does not befit a believer to be in a company in which Allah's orders are questioned and disobeyed and he is unable to prevent it" (Al-Kafi). He also said, "A person who sides with those people who speak badly of Allah's friends (Awleeyah al-Llah) has certainly defied Allah." (Al-Kafi)

Amir al-Mu'mineen (a) said, "A person who believes in and the Day of Resurrection would not stand at a place where people doubt, question and speak in defiance of Allah" (Al-Kafi). He also said, "Avoid the companionship of a wicked person because such a companion destroys his companion materially (by causing material loss) and spiritually (by causing doubts in his beliefs) (Ghurar al-Hikam)."

Imam Jawad (a) said, "Avoid the companionship of a wicked person since he is like an open sword without a sheath. It looks attractive but it is, indeed, threatening and its consequence is dreadful" (Bihar al-Anwar). Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Avoid the companionship of three types of people, the untrustworthy, the oppressor, and the informer because the untrustworthy can let you down one day, the oppressor can oppress you as well, and the informer can reveal your information (Tuhfa al-'Uql)."

Piety, chastity, honesty, worship and service to Allah (swt)'s cause constitute a strong veil against the punishment and wrath of Allah (swt). This veil can remain intact by refraining from the above-mentioned companionships and avoiding misfortunes and calamities that descend daily on mankind.

We have now come to the end of the first category of sins for which Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), prays for forgiveness. This category consists of five main types of sins that tear the veil of defense or immunity against sins. It is an intrinsic immunity possessed by all human beings as human values which prevent us from disobeying Allah (swt).

The Qur'an and the traditions of our Prophet (s) and our Ae'mmah (a) teach us valuable lessons and warn us to seek forgiveness by sincerely repenting for our sins and resolving

firmly not to commit any of those sins that would kill our immunity against sins of all categories mentioned in this Du'a.

We will now take up the second category of sins for discussion in the next chapter that bring down afflictions and calamities.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER FIVE

SECOND CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BRING DOWN HARDSHIPS, CALAMITIES AND GRIEF

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَلِلَّهِ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ فَادْعُوهُ بِهَا ۖ وَذَرُوا الَّذِينَ
يُلْحِدُونَ فِي أَسْمَائِهِ ۚ سَيُجْزَوْنَ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ

And to Allah belong (all) the most beautiful names, therefore
supplicate to Him by them, and shun those who violate the
sanctity of His names; soon they shall be requited for what they
used to do. (Q: 7:180)

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CHAPTER FIVE

SECOND CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BRING DOWN HARDSHIPS, CALAMITIES AND GRIEF

Imam Sajjad (a) mentions the following nine types of sins:

1. Defiance/Deliberate Disobedience of Allah (swt)'s Orders ("Baghy")
2. Violation of Human Rights ("al 'Udwan 'ala Huququq-Nas")
3. Mockery of Allah (swt)'s Servants ("al Sikhriya min 'Ibadil-Llah")
4. Breach of Covenants/Promises ("Naqdh al 'Ahad")
5. Open Acts of Disgrace and Misconduct ("al- l'lan bil Ma'asi")
6. Judgment against Allah (swt)'s Rules ("al-Hukm bi Ghairi ma Unzila-Llah")
7. Failure to pay "Zakat" and preventing others from paying "Zakat" ("al- imtina' an-Dafi' al-Zakat")
8. Deceit in Dealings/Defraud in Measures ("al-tataffif fil Mizan")
9. Spread of Lies and False Information ("Shubu' al-Kizb")

Let us now look at the above-mentioned sins in a little more detail.

1. DEFIANCE, DELIBERATE DISOBEDIENCE OF ALLAH'S ORDERS ("BAGHY")

The Arabic word "baghy" means rebellion, an open act of resistance and defiance against the Absolute authority of Allah (swt) or deliberately and knowingly infringing Allah (swt)'s commandments and rules. When a person commits a sin unknowingly or by oversight forgetting that it is a sin, Allah (swt) by His mercy, may forgive him after he repents sincerely, and the sin can be cleaned off from his records.

However, when a person openly rebels and declares that he does not care and acts blatantly in defiance of Allah (swt), he is said to have committed "baghy." The Qur'an uses the word "baghy" to also mean, among other things, corruption, crime and infidelity. The following verses and hadith illustrate the various meanings of the word "baghy":

a) *"Qaroon was among the community of Musa, but he rebelled against them and oppressed them. We gave him such a great amount of treasures that the keys of the trunks that contained the treasures would weigh heavy to the group of strong men who carried the keys" (Q. 28:76/81)*

Qaroon was the cousin of Prophet Musa and initially was among the believers but he turned into a disbeliever when Allah (swt) tested him by giving him an abundance of wealth. He became arrogant and worked with Firaun to oppress people by extorting heavy taxes from them. The Qur'an gives a graphic description of the way he used to dress and come out before the people with pomp and show of wealth,

On the other hand, Prophet Musa and those who were given knowledge kept advising him to give up his arrogance and oppression of people and utilize his God-given wealth for his

wellbeing in the hereafter and warned him against Allah(swt)'s punishment. His defiance finally resulted in his punishment. He and his house in which his treasures were stored were pulled into the earth forever.

The lesson we learn from this story is that the wealth we are given by Allah (swt) should be utilized for the comfort of our life in the hereafter. However, we are not prohibited to spend it for our comfort and enjoyment in this life. In this respect the Prophet (s) said, "The good among you are neither those who give up the life of here for the life of the hereafter nor those who give up the life of the hereafter for the life of the here, but those who, through moderation and economy, balance both the lives of the here and the hereafter."

b) "If Allah were to increase amply the sustenance of His servants ('ibaad), they would certainly become corrupt and spread corruption on the earth, but He sends it down in measure as He wills. Indeed, with regard to His servants, He is All-Aware, All-seeing."(Q. 42:27)

The history of human beings since its inception, supported by the day-to-day experience, proves that those who get rich and wealthy and/or get into the position of power and authority mostly lose their faith and go astray. Man prays to God to endow him with these bounties but, when he gets them, he loses his faith and becomes arrogant and oppressive. He rebels against God and openly defies His commandments. He does not care that he is being tested with what has been given to him.

At another place, Allah (swt) says, *"His are the treasures of the heavens and the earth; He increases the sustenance of whomsoever He wills and lessens the sustenance of*

whomsoever He wills. Indeed, He knows all things" (Q. 42:12). According to this verse the test is for both, the one who gets in abundance and the one who is disadvantaged.

Still at another place, Allah (swt) says, *"Don't they see that Allah increases the sustenance for whomsoever He wills and reduces the sustenance for whomsoever He wills? Indeed, in this there are signs for people who believe"* (Q. 30:37). The various signs of the Almighty power not only in the heavens and the earth but also in the behavior of human beings and the process of life, manifesting His merciful grace and bounties, mutual love and engagements in the worldly affairs, prove His absolute Authority over His creation which all submit to Him.

c) In Chapter 19 verse 28 (swt) says, "O' sister of Harun, your father was not a bad man, nor was your mother an unchaste woman." The verse refers to Janabe Maryam. When she conceived in spite of being single, people accused her of being unchaste. The verse quotes their words addressing her as "sister of Harun". Harun (not Prophet Harun) was known to be an exemplary righteous person who had become a symbol of righteousness. Janabe Maryam was known for her ideal chastity, modesty and purity. The words expressed the degree of surprise of the people in referring to Janabe Maryam's pure and priestly lineage and her parents' exceptional good morals. Therefore, how could she, in their false notion, betray her lofty position and bring disgrace to her noble and pure lineage?

d) Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Six negative attributes cannot be found or exist in a believer: rigidity, miserliness, stubbornness, untruthfulness, jealousy and disobedience of Allah's rules (baghy)."

2. VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS ("AL 'UDWAN 'ALA HUQUQUN-NAS")

DEFINITION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

We start with a simple definition. Human rights are based on the respect and dignity of man, to which he is entitled as a human being, irrespective of who he is, where he lives so long as he is alive and continues to live. Human rights are fundamental. Basically, they are natural sets of rights which Allah (swt) has given universally to all human beings, irrespective of their race and religion. The recognition of a man's basic nature ("fitrah"), that he is born to a certain degree with free will and equal in dignity and basic rights, forms the foundation of freedom, respect and dignity, justice and peace, and stability among the people and nations of the world.

CLASSIFICATION

Man-made classifications of these rights include civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights. They are all based on the natural fundamental rights which are: right of life, not to be killed by another human being; freedom from torture when being punished; freedom from slavery, not to be held in servitude by another; right to a fair trial before being judged; freedom of speech, subject to limitation of libel, slander and defamation; freedom of thought, conscious, religion and manifestation of one's belief and religion; freedom of movement, liberty to travel, reside and work in any country; freedom of teaching one's religion, practice, worship and observance.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islam has contributed to a very great extent in setting up a strong structure of justice and equity in the human society. The Prophet of Islam (s) brought about great and radical changes within a short span of twenty three years of his life. The Qur'an gave mankind its first and original charter of human rights and the Prophet(s)'s Sunnah, his way of life, provided the model for the practical application of the charter. In addition, the Qur'an gave Islam its constitution and social and economic laws, all based on justice and equity.

THE FIRST CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS

THE FOUNDATION

As a first step towards building the foundation of justice and equity in the society, the Prophet (s) united mankind under the banner of "Tawheed", the Oneness of God, and eradicated idolatry and belief in multiple gods and demigods. He eliminated all man-made distinctions and ranks, making piety the sole criterion of superiority. He established brotherhood among believers irrespective of their caste, color and lineage, and instilled mutual love and respect among them.

PROHIBITION OF VIOLATION

The Prophet (s) instructed them strictly not to violate the rights of each other. He said, "Give to everyone who possesses a right his right (Kulli zi haqqin haqqah)." He further said, "Allah has made seven rights obligatory upon the believer: to respect him in his person; to love him sincerely in his heart; to share with him his property; to consider backbiting against him as unlawful; to visit him in his illness; to attend and participate in his funeral; to say nothing but good about him after his death."

TRANSFORMATION

Armed with the Word of Allah (swt) (that is, the Qur'an) on the one hand, and the force of his character on the other, the Prophet (s) led the great revolutionary movement to transform the tribally-divided pagan and ignorant Arabs into one of the most learned, cultured, dynamic, closely knit and highly integrated society based on the doctrine of "Tawheed", the Oneness of God, and the Islamic ideology.

ABOLITION OF SLAVERY

The Prophet (s) abolished slavery in a most practical and peaceful way by which slaves were gradually liberated and lived honorable lives with their human rights fully protected. He provided for the general welfare of all the people, including liberated slaves, through a commonwealth called "Baytul Maal" – the Treasury of the Islamic government -- with strict instructions to take care particularly of the poor in the society. He instituted an economic system for equitable distribution of wealth under which accumulation of wealth was checked through laws of inheritance and taxation with prescribed rates.

ELEVATION OF WOMEN

Islam honored women and gave them respect and high position in family and social life. As an example, the law gives a wife the right to her personal life, welfare and basic needs, the right to exercise her own free will and make her own decisions, the right to own her own property, the right to keep her own earnings from her work and income derived from her investments exclusively for herself (the husband or anyone else has no say or right in it), the right to complain against her husband for mistreatment, the right to fight for her own right

when deprived, the right to defend herself against injustice and to speak out against oppression and abuse and seek redress (Allamah Tabatabai, Al-Mizan, Chapter Four of the Qur'an).

THE SECOND CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The Charter of Human Rights of Imam Sajjad (a) ("Risa'alat al-Huquq") elaborates the well-known saying of the Prophet (s) ("Kulli zi Haqqin Haqqah") which has been quoted above in a beautiful way. The word "haqq" in Arabic has a much wider sense than the word "right" in English. "Haqq" means justice, truth, reality, necessity, obligation, duty and responsibility.

RELATIONSHIPS

Islam views man first in his relationship with God and then in his relationship with the creations of God. The right of God is to be worshipped, only Him and Him alone, without ascribing any partner to Him ("Tawheed"). The soul of man has a right to redemption in the hereafter. The way to redemption is to obey God, and through obedience, the servant opens himself to compassion and mercy which depend upon following His guidance given in the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet (s).

THE THEME OF THE CHARTER

The theme of the charter of Rights of Imam Sajjad (a) is that the primary duties of man are towards the various organs of his body and the practices of the individual that determine his relationship to God. The Organs have rights because they share in man's destiny. The practices have rights because they shape the destiny of the soul. Other human beings have rights because they form the context within which practices of the individual take place. Human actions can be correct only if the rights of God's creations are understood and fulfilled. These

rights extend to the whole humanity. Any violation of these rights will constitute a sin which brings down calamities ("Tunzilun-niqam").

UNO'S CHARTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS

No concept of human rights existed in the West before the 17th Century. Since then the concept has undergone development over the years and finally emerged in the first Declaration of Human Rights codified by the United Nations Organization as recently as 1948. Almost all countries in the world are signatories to this document, yet violation of these rights take place everywhere and all the time and nothing is done about it.

COMPULSION IN FAITH PROHIBITED

The Prophet (s) prohibited compulsion in faith, not to force Jews or people of other faiths to convert to Islam. He set up a code of respect for the leaders of other faiths and protection of life, property and places of worship of their adherents under Islamic rule, including the choice of being adjudicated under their respective religions.

ISLAMIC MILITARY CODE

The Prophet (s) trained Muslims to strictly observe the military code of conduct in battles that were fought in the defense of Islam and enforced humane treatment of prisoners of war and protection of their human rights under the Islamic rules.

These are given as few examples of how Islam has given mankind the charter of human rights 1400 years ago and provided safeguards so that they are not violated. Any violation

is considered as a sin against Allah (swt), punishable both here in this world and in the hereafter.

3. MOCKERY OF ALLAH'S SERVANTS ("AL-SAKHRIYAH MIN 'IBADIL-LLAH")

Making fun of people, laughing and looking down at their poor appearance, low grade, dirty work, belief or any other reason that would harm them is a major sin that leads to bringing down calamities ("tunzilun-niqam") in this world and punishment in the hereafter. Mocking people amounts to insulting their human dignity and belittling their self-respect. The Qur'an considers people who make fun of other people as hypocrites, oppressors and corrupt. Allah (swt) says, "When they meet with those who believe, they say 'we believe,' but when they go back to their fellow disbelievers (the devilish people) they say 'Surely, we are with you, we were only mocking, laughing in our hearts at them'" (2:14). At another place the Qur'an says, "O' you who believe, do not let people mock, laugh at one another lest one should be better than the other ..." (49:11)

The Prophet (s) said, "Anyone who mocks to insult my friend (a believer) has indeed set out to fight against me." Imam Sadiq (a) said, "On the Day of Judgment a caller will call, pointing to a group of faceless people, 'These are the people who harmed the believers, disregarded them, insulted them and mocked them for their belief.' These people will then be thrown into the Hell-Fire." (Al-Kafi, 2/35)

WAY OF ENJOYMENT

Nowadays mocking and caricaturing political leaders and social celebrities, in particular, has become a profession in the world of entertainment, largely in the West. It forms a source of

enjoyment and laughter on a regular basis on TV Shows and cartoons in newspapers and magazines.

These shows and cartoons are technically and professionally produced. They attract large numbers of viewers who enjoy laughing at the jokes that mock the personalities. Jokes are made by professional actors who are employed by companies working in this industry. It is a money-making profession for the producers as well as the actors and the cartoonists who draw up the cartoons.

Islam condemns this practice as it amounts to damaging the character of human beings and lowering their status and respect in the eyes of the people in the society. It has the overall effect of lowering the general level of morality in the society. Ultimately, such people who are engaged in mocking and caricaturing end up suffering from negative psychological traits and spiritual damage. It is a bad and harmful practice and that is why Islam condemns it as sinful and a cause for affliction and calamities ("tunzilun-niqam").

4. BREACH OF COVENANTS/PROMISES ("AHD", "W'AD")

DEFINITION

A covenant is a formally binding spoken or written promise to engage in, or refrain from a specified action(s). Usually, it is a written, signed and sealed document. Historically, it refers to treaties or other written agreements. Religiously, particularly in Islam, it is a sacred and inviolable promise made to Allah (swt) by a person to perform, or refrain from a specified action(s). There are more than eighty verses in the Qur'an on this subject, describing their types and obligation of fulfilling them, and

several Shari' rules and regulations relating to them, and the punishment for violating them.

ETHICS

Entering into covenants and making promises or pledges are two important moral and ethical issues in Islam. Fulfilling them has been given as one of the signs of a believer ("Mu'min"). Breaching or breaking them is considered as sinful and brings down calamities and afflictions. Islam has given great importance to acting strictly in accordance with the condition(s) made in the covenant or the promise. The Qur'an contains many verses on this subject as indicated above. In addition, the Prophet of Islam (s) and the Imams, who were the successors after him, reinforced the Word of Allah (swt) by their various sayings and actions.

THE QUR'AN

The following are a few verses quoted to illustrate the importance Islam attaches to covenant ("ahd") and promise ("w'ad").

Allah (swt) says, *"Fulfill Allah's covenant when you make a covenant, and do not break the oaths after solemnizing them when indeed you have appointed Allah as a security for it ..."* (Q.16:91). The verse emphatically enjoins the fulfillment of any promise, undertaking, pact or promise in which Allah (swt) has been pledged as a guarantor for the fulfillment of it.

At another place, Allah (swt) says, *"O' you who believe, fulfill the covenants and the promises made by you..."* (Q. 5:1). The word *"uqud"* here has a very wide meaning. It covers covenants, agreements, pacts, promises, engagements and treaties, made with either a fellow human being or with Allah

(swt), His Prophets or with each other. It makes no difference whether the promise is made to Allah (swt) in relation to an act of worship or with the Prophet (s), the A'emmah (a) or with a common man. This Divine order clearly shows the importance that Islam gives to the welfare and harmony of the individual and the society as a whole.

A Muslim is required to strictly obey Allah (swt) and abide by His orders, in this respect, to fulfill the promises they make. Allah (swt) says, *"... indeed, Allah does not break His promise"* (Q. 3:9). In another verse, Allah (swt) says, *"... and fulfill your promise. Indeed, every promise that you make shall surely be questioned (about its fulfillment)."* (Q. 17:34)

BREACH

The Qur'an condemns those people who break the covenant as sinners, unbelievers and immoral and says, *"Those who break the covenant made with Allah after pledging it solemnly, they are the ones who are the losers."* (Q. 2:83)

Similarly, at several other places, Allah (swt) says, *"They are the ones who made covenant, a group among them ignored their covenant (did not fulfill), while the majority of them were unbelievers"* (Q. 2:100); *"We did not find in most of them any (trust of honoring) covenants. Indeed We found most of them to be the wrongdoers."* (Q.7:102)

"Those with whom you have made treaty and who violated their treaty every time, they are the ones who have no piety" (Q. 8:56); *"Fulfill Allah's covenant when you make it, and do not break (your) oath after you make it solemnly, when you have made Allah a witness over yourselves."* (Q. 16:91)

HADITH

The importance that the Qur'an gives to fulfilling covenants and promises is clear from these verses. Similarly, their breach is condemned as a great sin, hypocrisy, unbelief and transgression against Allah (swt)'s order. The Prophet (s) has reinforced these verses. He says, "Three qualities are found in a hypocrite, regardless of the fact that he prays, fasts and considers himself as a Muslim: when he is trusted, he betrays the trust; when he speaks, he lies; and when he makes a promise, he breaks it." (Al-Kafi, Bab al-Kufr)

We have analyzed four of the nine sins in this chapter that are categorized as bringing down hardships and calamities. There are five types of sins that remain but we will discuss them in the next chapter.

SUMMARY

To summarize the four types of sins which we have discussed: first is defiance against Allah (swt)'s orders ("baghy") due to arrogance ("kibr") and self-glorification; second is the violation of human rights resulting from greed and love of power to dominate and rule over others; third is the mockery of people owing to a sense of superiority and greatness; and fourth is breach of covenants/promises brought about by disloyalty, lack of faith and moral integrity.

We can clearly see the gravity of these sins and the reason why they cause calamities, disasters and grief.

دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER SIX

SECOND CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BRING DOWN HARSHIPS, CALAMITIES AND GRIEF (CONT'D)

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

لِكُلِّ أُمَّةٍ جَعَلْنَا مَنَسَكًا هُمْ نَاسِكُوهُ ۖ فَلَا
يُنَازِعُكَ فِي الْأَمْرِ ۚ وَاذْعُ إِلَىٰ رَبِّكَ ۚ إِنَّكَ لَعَلَىٰ
هُدًى مُّسْتَقِيمٍ

To every nation We have prescribed rites of devotion which they used to observe, therefore they should not dispute with you about the matter and call/invite them to your Lord; Indeed you are guided on the right path.(Q: 22:67)

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CHAPTER SIX

SECOND CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BRING DOWN CALAMITIES, DISASTERS AND GRIEF (CONT'D)

We will now discuss briefly the remaining five types of sins mentioned in the previous chapter. These are as follows:

1. Open Acts of Disgrace and Misconduct ("al-I'laan bil Ma'asi")
2. Spread of Lies and False Information ("Shuy'u al-Kizb")
3. Judgment against Allah (swt)'s Rules ("al-Hukmu bi Ghairi ma Anzal-Llah")
4. Failure to pay "Zakat" and prevent others from paying 'Zakat' ("al-Imtina' 'an Daf'i al-Zakat")
5. Deceit in Dealings/Fraud in Weights and Measures ("al-Tatfif fil Mizan")

We start our discussion with:

OPEN ACTS OF DISGRACE AND MISCONDUCT ("AL-I'LAAN BIL MA'ASI")

Chapter 6, Verse 151 of the Qur'an gives guiding principles of life which are also given in Taurat revealed to Prophet Musa and included as one of the Ten Commandments. Among these principles is keeping far away, not even going near deeds that constitute open as well hidden sins. Hidden sins harm man's relationship with his Lord. Open sins exhibit total

shamelessness of the sinner and his open defiance of the Divine laws and the norms of an Islamic society.

The harm done to the Islamic environment by those people who commit sins openly and brag about their shameless behavior of defiance in public is indeed horrific. The young people in the society are attracted towards these people and are adversely influenced by them. They lose their sense of public morality and integrity and undermine the integrity and the public image of the Islamic society.

Islam condemns corruption and every behavior in public that leads to the spread of corruption in the public morality of the Islamic society. It gives great importance to a morally healthy society and makes it obligatory on Muslims to promote it under the injunctions of "amr-bil-ma'ruf" and "nahi anil-munkar", enjoining the good and prohibiting the bad. Therefore, it is no wonder that the sin of shameless behavior committed in public brings down calamities, disasters and grief on the society.

Man has been endowed with a natural attribute of "hayaa", a word that describes both shyness and a deep sense of shame before his Creator as well as his fellow human beings. It also means restraint, self-control that prevents a man or a woman from doing something shameful openly in public.

When a man or a woman destroys that attribute by their repeated shameful deeds done in public, they become immune from the embarrassment of the public gaze. It takes off completely the veil of shamefulness which distinguishes humans from animals. Animals follow their instincts without feeling any shame or showing a sense of right and wrong. Shameless people resemble animals in their behavior.

Modesty, another common word also used for shyness, describes both shyness and a deep feeling of shame before God and fellow human beings regardless of whether one is alone in one's privacy or not. It is reflected in speech, dress and conduct both in public and private of an individual to his Lord as well as to the creation of his Lord.

In Chapter 7:26 of the Qur'an Allah (swt) says, "O' Children of Adam, Indeed We have sent down unto you dress to cover your private parts and for your beautification and means of bodily comforts but mind well that the dress of piety is the best for a healthy physical and spiritual growth ..." Modesty leads to constant remembrance of Allah (swt) and the prevention of even the smallest of sins. Being shy of public gaze is the driving force for the attainment of modesty.

Several verses in the Qur'an prohibit and call for keeping away from committing open acts of shamelessness both in public and private. They range from seeking permission before entering any room lest they should infringe on the privacy of those inside to certain manner of dress for men as well as for women.

Chapter 24:30/31 contain injunctions to both men and women to dress in a prescribed form so as to guard their chastity in order to prevent them from committing vulgar acts in private as well as in public. The modern cinematographic pictures shown in public houses as well as in private on TVs at homes lead to an unhealthy and immoral relationships between men and women, and corrupt the young minds right from their childhood.

It is reported from Imam Sadiq (a) that, "Belief in Allah brings about humility and a feeling of shame and a sense of shyness (hayaa) in man and leads man to the Paradise."

The Prophet (s) said, "Be modest, humble before Allah as He is rightfully worthy of humility (kama haqqa hu)." He also said, "Be modest, humble before Allah the way you are humble before a man of high integrity, piety and respect (saleh) in your community."

SPREAD OF LIES AND FALSE INFORMATION ("SHUY'U AL-KIZB")

THE MALICE OF LYING

The phenomenon of lying and spreading lies through mass media has regretfully become the "fabric of social and political life." Lying is a common, bad and harmful part of human relationship. Instead of helping the relationship, lying on the contrary damages it. An exposed lie undermines trust and sows suspicion among people.

For people who are habituated to lying, it becomes an automatic impulse to lie when they open their mouths to speak. Research shows that both men and women lie in approximately the same proportion, in one-fifth of all their social interactions. During one week, they deceive 30% of the people with whom they interact on a one-on-one basis.

Lying is considered an integral part of several occupations. In legal profession, lawyers constructing far-fetched defense on behalf of their clients have to lie so as to lend credibility to their case. In journalism, reporters have to misrepresent themselves so as to gain access to good stories.

Lying has become a despicable vice rampant in our societies. Deceiving others with canny use of words is seen as a quality of cleverness. One of the distinctive features of our age is that lying no longer carries the stigma it once did. Today lying has

been institutionalized. It is the way many of us live today because we figure that if we are persuasive enough, lying would work well. History shows that countries can be invaded and wars started as a result of spreading lies. We bend the truth a little bit, put a spin, having no intention to mislead, yet what we say is a lie. Gone are the days when a lie destroyed the liar's dignity and eroded his trustworthiness.

Islam considers lying as a great and serious sin. There are numerous verses in the Qur'an and Hadith of the Prophet (s) and Ae'mmah (a) that condemn lying and describe its harmful and evil consequences. Let us look at a few verses to get an idea of how great is this sin. *"Surely, Allah does not guide on the right path one who is a liar, ungrateful."* (Q. 39:3). *"... and pray for the curse of Allah on the liars."* (Q. 3:61 – the famous verse of Mubahila). *"... the curse of Allah be on him if he is one of the liars"* (Q. 24:7). *"And do not follow that of which you have no knowledge. Indeed, the hearing, the eye-sight and the heart – all of these are accountable; they will be questioned about it"* (Q.17:36). *"Only those who fabricate lies are the ones who do not believe in the signs of Allah."* (Q. 16:105)

The Prophet (s) said, "... beware of a lie (Qauluz-zur)." He also said, "The worst speech is a lie," and "A liar has the least humanity (morality)." Imam 'Ali (a) said, "Man does not taste the sweetness of belief unless he avoids lying, be it serious or joking." He also said, "Lying is the worst obscenity," and "Allah has set some locks for sins; the key of these locks is drinking intoxicants, and even worse than drinking intoxicants is lying."

All these verses and hadith give us a good idea of how seriously Allah (swt) considers lying as a transgression against Him. The evil of useless and harmful talk among men about the affairs of others, idle chatter and uninformed or misinformed stories

about the character and conduct of others create mutual ill-feelings and disharmony among people in the society.

We see how sinful and evil lying is in the eyes of Allah (swt), how treacherous He considers spreading lies, rumors, fabrications, false accusations and assassination of characters. Today this practice is generally prevalent not only in the mass media but also in the human societies all over the world. Some are done with no apparent purpose, some with hidden motives and others for personal gain. In Nahjul Balagha Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) says, "Do not quote everything circulating among common people. It is likely to be a lie." The Prophet (s) is reported to have said, "He who attributes something to me which I have not said, shall sit in the Fire."

Listening to a lie is also prohibited ("haram"). Just as it is "haram" to speak a lie, it is also "haram" to listen to it when knowing that it is a lie. And also, just as it is prohibited to read or write a lie, it is also prohibited to quote a lie. The Qur'an has denounced Jews and polytheists for spreading untrue things. It says regarding some of them "...*They are listeners of a lie ...*" (Q. 5:42). At another place the Qur'an says "...*avoid vain (false) words.*" (Q. 22:30)

To conclude, it is most regretful that we, human beings, endowed with intellect have fallen victims to this sinful and vicious disease. It is not surprising therefore that the sin of spreading lies is the cause of calamities, disasters and grief. In this Du'a, Imam 'Ali (a) is asking for forgiveness from Allah (swt) for this serious sin.

JUDGMENT AGAINST ALLAH (SWT)'S RULES ("AL-HUKMU BI GHAIRI MA ANZALAL-LAH")

Giving judgment contrary to Allah (swt)'s commandments contained in the Qur'an and in our Ae'mmah (a)'s Hadith constitutes a great sin, a transgression, oppression and a disbelief in Allah (swt). If a judge is aware of Allah (swt)'s Rules but acts against them in giving his judgment based on non-religious selfish motives, he is, in the words of the Qur'an, a defiant transgressor. He is also an oppressor because he has deprived a human being from his legal rights. He is also a disbeliever ("kafir") because he has openly refused to accept Allah (swt)'s laws. By knowingly giving a judgment in contravention of Allah (swt)'s laws, he has gone out of the bounds of Islam as well as humanity.

Surah 5, al-Ma'ida contains several verses relating to this subject that condemn corrupt judges, lawyers and scholars who act against Allah (swt)'s Rules given in the Qur'an. Let us look at a few of these verses:

Verse 5:44 says, "We sent down the Torah (Taurat) containing guidance and light. The Prophets who submitted to Allah's commandments as revealed to Prophet Musa judged by it for the Jews and so did the rabbis and "akhbar", the Doctors of Jewish Law (Jewish priests and scholars of Jewish Laws who were pious and had fear of Allah in their hearts): they were entrusted with and ordered to preserve the Book of AllahThose who do not judge by what Allah sent down and were witnesses to it, they are the unbelievers."

The verse contains the warning against deviating from judging in accordance with the Divine Laws owing to fear or greed for

personal gains. This verse is also applicable to Muslims to judge an act in accordance with the commandments of Allah (swt).

The next verse, 5:45 says, "And in it we prescribed for them, the Jews: a life for a life, an eye for an eye ... those who do not judge by what Allah sent down, it is they who are the unjust, the wrongdoers." The next verse, 5:46 says, "And we followed them with Jesus (Prophet 'Isa), son of Mary (Maryam), to confirm that which was before him of the Torah (Taurat), and We gave him the Evangel (Injeel) containing guidance and light ..." The following verse 5:47 says, "Let the people of the Evangel (Injeel) judge by what Allah has sent down in it. Those who do not judge by what Allah has sent down, they are the ones who are the transgressors."

To summarize, in all the four successive verses, 5:44/47, the Qur'an has called those who do not act in accordance with what Allah (swt) has revealed as "kafir" unbeliever, "dhalim" unjust/oppressor and "fasiq" transgressor. The various words used refer to the various aspects of not following the Divine Laws in ruling and judging. It amounts to the defiance of Allah (swt)'s absolute power and authority. These verses apply equally to the people of the Book ("Ahl al-Kitab") and Muslims who follow the Qur'an. All of them are required to submit to Allah (swt)'s Laws contained in the three heavenly Scriptures.

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "One who gives a judgment in contradiction to Allah's rules even on two drachmas (a handful of coins) has committed blasphemy."

FAILURE TO PAY “ZAKAT” AND PREVENT OTHERS FROM PAYING “ZAKAT” (“AL- IMTINA’ ‘AN DAF ‘I ZAKAT”)

“Zakat” in Arabic means that which purifies. In Islam, it is defined as fixed rates of obligatory dues payable periodically by Muslims to those who qualify under verse 2:177 of the Qur’an. They are: (Ahle Tashayyu) Shi’a relatives who are poor; Shi’a orphans who are needy; poor people in general, irrespective of their religion; stranded travelers who are in need of help to return to their home; persons who are genuinely and honestly asking for help; persons who are in bondage such as debts; persons who are not Muslims but have shown an inclination to become Muslims or helping Muslims in their activities; those working in the collection of “Zakat”; those who do any act of charity in the way of Allah (swt) (“fi sabilil Llah”).

The various articles constituting the wealth of the individual or an industrial or business organization on which “Zakat” is payable are: agricultural produce such as grains, wheat, barley dates and raisins; animals who are produced and reared in the animal husbandry industry such as cattle, sheep, goat and camel; produce of mining industry such as gold and silver; and all possessions which make up the capital of an individual or an industrial or business organization based on its net worth. It should be noted that payment of “Zakat” based on the net worth of a business organization is obligatory as “ihtiyat-e-wajib” according to the “fatwa” of our Marja’. Different rates, quantities and times for each item have been fixed for “Zakat” to become liable for payment. The details given in the rules of “fiqh” contained in Taudhihul Masae’l are beyond the scope of this book.

"Zakat" is an Islamic system for the redistribution of wealth so as to ease the economic hardship of the poor and eliminate inequality in society. It acts as a barrier to the accumulation of wealth for any one individual. In the Qur'an, "Zakat" is jointly and repeatedly mentioned with "Salat" at various places and heavily stressed to indicate its importance. The Qur'an mentions it at more than 30 different places, defining it as a charity-based institution meant to eliminate poverty and inequality in the society.

"Zakat" is reckoned as an act of piety through which a Muslim expresses concern for the well-being of fellow Muslims as well as other poor people in the society. It plays an important role in preserving harmony between the wealthy and the poor. As an act that promotes a more equitable redistribution of wealth, "Zakat" fosters a sense of solidarity among the members of the Muslim "Ummah" and the humanity as a whole. If all Muslims on whom "Zakat" is obligatory were to pay "Zakat", there would be no poor Muslims left in the "Ummah."

"Zakat" is also meant to discourage hoarding of capital goods, especially foodstuffs, and to indirectly stimulate investment in the business of individuals and business organizations by ploughing profits back into the business for further growth. It can also stimulate the economy as a whole as "Zakat" can also be used to build hospitals, schools for religious education, roads, bridges and such other public conveniences for the benefit of Muslims as well as others. It can also be used to pay for the educational expenses such as fees for students pursuing religious studies.

We have also seen some Hadith that admonish those who do not pay "Zakat." Refusal to pay it is considered a sign of hypocrisy. Allah (swt) does not accept the prayers of such

people. On the Day of Judgment, the person who did not pay "Zakat" while it was obligatory on him to pay will be held accountable and punished.

Today, we see mankind suffering from calamities, misfortunes and grief all around the world due to the failure of the majority of Muslims to pay "Zakat" and lack of the proper machinery for equitable distribution of the amounts collected. The rich are becoming richer and the poor are becoming poorer. The number of poor people in the world is on the increase. Some are even going so far as discouraging and stopping others from paying "Zakat" for the alleged reason that it is not obligatory to pay it. Imam 'Ali (a) has taught us in Du'a Kumayl to pray to Allah (swt) for the forgiveness of our sins that bring about calamities, misfortunes and grief.

DECEIT IN DEALINGS/FRAUD IN WEIGHTS AND MEASURES ("AL-TTFIF FIL MIZAN")

In Islam strict honesty, justice and fair play in dealings with people and installing accurate weights and measures for business transactions are heavily stressed. The Qur'an uses the word "tatfif" and "mutaffifeen" for the deceit/fraud and the deceiver/defrauder, respectively. The Qur'an defines what these words mean in verses 2-3 of Chapter 83 which is solely about this serious sin. After cursing defrauders in weights and measures, Allah (swt) says, "... who, when they measure or weigh a commodity bought from people, demand and take the full measure or weight of the commodity, but defraud by giving less in measure or weight when they sell a commodity to them."

This rule applies not only to weighing commodities which are sold by weight but also to articles which are sold by various other units of measurement both in metric and imperial units

such as meters and yards for cloth, hectares and acres for land, liters and gallons for liquids, and fraud in currency and other monetary transactions. The rule also applies in selling adulterated goods where a high-quality item is mixed with a low-quality item to cheat, or low-quality goods are sold at higher prices by labeling them as brand names. In short, the rule applies equally to all kinds of cheatings regardless of disguises or subtleties used in concealing the true nature of business transactions.

The next five verses, 4 to 8, warn such people of the terrible punishment awaiting them in the hereafter. "Do they think that they will not be raised on the mighty Day (of Judgment), the day when mankind shall stand before the Lord of all the worlds. No indeed, the Book of the wicked and the vicious is in Sijjin and what can tell you what Sijjin is? (It is beyond the human power of perception to understand it)." It is a written Record which predetermines the destination of all the transgressors and evil doers.

When this Chapter was revealed to the Prophet (s), he went to the open marketplace and amid traders selling and buying goods, read it out loudly and mentioned the punishment against five grievous sins and evil practices that call for calamities, disasters and grief. These practices were commonly taking place among those traders. They are: one, braking promise or any solemn undertaking; two, telling people that which Allah (swt) and his Prophet (s) have not said, in other words, tell a lie about them; three, immoral and unethical behavior; four, fraudulent dealing in weights and measures; five, failure to pay "Zakat." (Minhajus Sadiqeen)

The Prophet (s) is also reported to have said, "One who defrauds in measures by giving less while dealing with people

will be taken to the bottom of the Hell-Fire in the hereafter, and thrown between two mountains of fire. He will then be told to weigh the mountains and he will have to do so continuously forever.” (The Great Sins – “Gunahane Kabira”, 1:418).

Imam ‘Ali ibne Abi Talib (a), after his official work as Khalifatul Muslimeen or the Ruler of Muslim Empire, used to go to the marketplace and preach to the traders , “O’ People, fear Allah and practice justice and equity in the weights and measures of goods. Do not take away unlawfully from people their rightful dues, and do not commit mischief in the land.” Once he found merchant weighing saffron on a defective scale. He went to him, threw down the saffron from the pan and ordered the merchant to correct the balance first and then weigh it again.

So far we have discussed the spiritual aspect of this subject. On the secular side, it is also considered a crime to defraud in weighing and measuring commodities in business transactions. Various mechanisms have been set up by governments as well as international bodies and institutions to control and supervise the products of foods and other manufactured commodities which are sold in the market to test whether they conform to the standards fixed nationally and internationally. Today, national and international trade is infested by fraudulent practices that harm the human society and are the cause of damage and decline in morality and business ethics on a global scale in spite of various controls and supervisions which have been put in place.

It is therefore not surprising that this great sin spiritually damages the heart and ultimately kills it, while in social and business dealings it causes disharmony and damage to human relationships that bring about calamities, misfortunes and grief

in the world. That is why Imam 'Ali (a) is asking forgiveness from Allah (swt) for this in his Du'a Kumayl.

CONCLUSION

Gratitude ("shukr") in prosperity, patience ("sabr") in adversity, and the heart ("qalb"), courage to uphold the truth even when inconvenient and painful are the qualities that make up the component parts of the concept of morality and ethics in Islam. For an individual and society, morality and ethics are the fundamental sources of strength, just as the opposite characteristics of immorality and unethical practices are the main causes of decline. Islam is concerned about the moral health of the society so, in Islam, morality is universal in its scope and applicability as it addresses every aspect of human life.

A Muslim is expected not only to be virtuous but also to enjoin virtue. He must not only refrain from committing evil and vicious acts but also actively engage in enjoining people to abstain from them. He is expected to be morally healthy and also to be able to contribute to the moral health of the society as a whole.

Chapters Four and Five cover the Du'a of Kumayl that relate to the sins that violate Islamic morality and ethical issues as a result of which we suffer from misfortunes, hardships, calamities and grief.

دُعَاءُ كُمْمِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER SEVEN

THIRD CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT CHANGE DIVINE FAVORS INTO DIVINE DISFAVORS/DISPLEASURE

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

قُلِ ادْعُوا اللَّهَ أَوْ ادْعُوا الرَّحْمَنَ ۖ أَيًّا مَا تَدْعُوا
فَلَهُ الْأَسْمَاءُ الْحُسْنَىٰ ۚ وَلَا تَجْهَرُ بِصَلَاتِكَ وَلَا
تُخَافِتْ بِهَا وَابْتَغِ بَيْنَ ذَلِكَ سَبِيلًا

Say: Call upon/invoke Allah or call upon "Ar Rahman" (the Beneficent Allah); whichever (name) you call upon (is the same because) to him belong the most beautiful names; and do not say your prayer too loudly nor too inaudibly but seek a middle way between these two (extremes).(Q: 17:110)

HIGHLIGHTS

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CHAPTER SEVEN

THIRD CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT CHANGE DIVINE FAVORS INTO DIVINE DISFAVORS/DISPLEASURE

Sins which are included in this Category are:

1. Oppress People ("Dhulm an-Nas")
2. Give up the Practice of Virtuous/Good Deeds and Intentions ("Faquad an-Irad al-Khayr")
3. Turn away from Allah (swt)'s Grace and abandon the Practice of doing Good to Others ("Nabaz al-Ihsan")
4. Ungrateful for Allah (swt)'s Bounties ("Kufr Anin-N'imah")
5. Neglect to thank Allah (swt) for His Blessings ("Tark al-Shukr")

We will now discuss each of these sins briefly.

OPPRESS PEOPLE ("DHULM AN-NAS")

MEANING

In Arabic the word "dhulm", used generally to mean oppression, has a wide meaning. In addition to oppress, it means to do wrong or evil, to treat wrongly and unjustly, to harm, to suppress, to tyrannize, and to commit outrage. From the Islamic viewpoint, an act of moving a thing away from its rightful place is "dhulm."

The word "dhulm", together with its derivatives such as "dhalama", "dhalim" and "dhalimin", is a very important, stern and frequently used term in the Qur'an and only the Qur'anic context can provide us with the most reliable definition and insight into the way the term has been used. The words 'oppression' and 'tyranny,' with their narrow political connotation, cannot do justice to the wide range of meanings embodied in the Qur'an.

According to the Qur'an, the basic meaning of "dhulm" is to deny the existence and reality of Allah (swt) and His revelation, and then to transgress the bounds, limits, laws, commandments and prohibitions He has laid down. The Qur'anic perspectives can clearly be understood in a few typical verses such as: 2:140; 2:144; 2:229; 2:254; 5:45; 7:37; 10:17; 18:57; 32:22; 29:49; 31:13; 49:11; 65:1. The term "dhulm" is used as the opposite of 'Adl or justice.

Du'a No. 14 of Imam Sajjad (a) in Sahifa as-Sajjadiyyah in which he prays to Allah (swt) to ward off the oppression ("dhulm") of the unjust rulers ("dhalimin"), who oppressed people cruelly and killed them mercilessly, gives us a glimpse of the lives of the oppressed people at that time. The state of affairs in this day and age is much worse as oppression has taken manifest as well as hidden forms at the political, economic, commercial, social and even religious levels. Peoples' rights are suppressed or denied to them. The rights are indeed extensive and cover the whole field of personal, social and political life. "Risalatul Huquq", The Charter of Rights, of Imam Sajjad (a) gives details of these rights. Suppression or denial of these rights is an open oppression ("dhulm").

'ADL/JUSTICE

It is therefore evident that "dhulm" is an atrocious and terrible sin against humanity. Oppression of any kind, whether small or big, is detestable. Allah (swt) says, *"We shall set up the scales of justice on the Day of Resurrection and no soul will be mistreated in the least (absolute justice will be done), and even if it be the weight of a mustard seed, We will bring it to account and We are enough to take the account of it"* (Q. 21:47); *"On that day (the Day of Resurrection) mankind will come forth in various separate groups to be shown their deeds. So whoever does an atom's weight of good will see it and whoever does an atom's weight of evil will see it"* (Q. 99:6/8). It is evident therefore that everyone will be dealt with strict justice. Allah (swt) will be the sole Judge on that Day.

THE ROLE MODEL

Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), in his Sermor ("Khutbah") No 224 of Nahjul Balagha, presents not only to us - his followers and the Muslims in general - but also to the world at large, the level of justice that rulers and common men should all strive to achieve in order to remove poverty and improve the quality of life of the poor, and bring about peace and security at all levels of the society.

Amir al-Mu'mineen swears, " By Allah, I would rather pass a night awake suffering from pain and injuries by lying on the thorns, the sharp prickles of Sa'dan, (a plant with sharp spikes that tears the skin on a slight movement), or be pulled in chains, in pain and humiliation, as a prisoner than meet Allah and His Messenger on the Day of Judgment as an oppressor (dhalim) who did wrong to other people, or a usurper who wrongfully took away from people (ghasiban) anything of material wealth.

And how can I do wrong and oppress any one (for the sake of this life) that is moving fast towards destruction ...”

In a lengthy letter No. 45 in Nahjul Balagha to Uthman ibn Hunayf al Ansari, a close companion of Imam ‘Ali (a), whom he made the governor of Basra, Imam ‘Ali wrote to censure him for his behavior when he heard that Uthman was associating with rich people, attended a banquet arranged by them and came under their influence to make policy that benefited them. Among many other things the imam wrote, “Uthman, I never thought that you would accept the banquet of people who turn out the beggars and invite the rich ... If I were to be given the kingdom and the rule of the whole world provided I took away a tiny piece of grain from the mouth of an ant, by Allah, I would never commit that act of dhulm that would deprive the ant from the sustenance (rizq) that it got from Allah.”

Such was the high degree of justice and equity of Amir al-Mu'mineen (a) that it won him the acclamation of the world as the Just Ruler that ever lived on this earth.

Imam ‘Ali ibn al-Husayn Zainul ‘Abidin (a) in his Du'a for each day of the week contained in the Sahifa as-Sajjadiyyah goes further in the Du'a for Monday (Du'a No. 63) than what Amir al-Mu'mineen (a) says in his above mentioned sermon. He prays to Allah (swt) thus: “I ask You with regard to the complaint of wrongdoings (madhalim) I have committed to Your servants: if there is Your male servant ('abdika) among Your servants ('ibadika), or a female servant (amatin) among Your female servants (imaaika) who has a complaint against me for having wronged him/ her, committed (dhulm) on him/her, or violated his/her reputation, or usurped his/her property, or did wrong to his wife or his child, or I spoke bad and evil things about him behind his back, or I made him greedy, scornful and a bigot, or

I put evil desire in him, or made him commit sin of showing off to people ...

The Imam continues: "or I wronged him while he was present or absent from his place, or whether he was living or dead at that time and I was not able to reach him to ask for his pardon or compensate him, or he was obstinate and refused to accept apology or compensation or restitution: under these conditions, therefore, I ask you, O' the One who has power to grant my needs as You will, and have a complete control over his (plaintiff's) mind and intentions, to bless Muhammad and the progeny of Muhammad and make him pleased and happy with me in whatever way You wish and grant me Your mercy and forgiveness which neither decreases nor affects You in any way, O', the Most Merciful."

(The above quotations have been paraphrased so as to make them easily understandable.)

Such was the degree of utmost caution and care that our A'emmah (a) took to see that nobody suffered from any wrongdoing in any form or type which would amount to "dhulm", however insignificant, committed by them. To achieve this level of justice and equity, humanity has to wait for the reappearance of Mahdi "al-Qayim" from the occultation ("ghaybah"). He will fill the world with justice and equity in the same manner as it has been filled with injustice and oppression. ("Yamla ul- ardha Qistan wa 'adla kama muliat dhulman wa jaura").

OPPRESSION CONDEMNED AND CURSED

The Qur'an contains countless verses relating to "dhulm" in various verbal forms and the severe punishment for committing it. Reference to a few of them has been given in the preceding

paragraph. Suffice it to say that Allah (swt) condemns “dhulm” of all kinds to which people are subjected by all oppressors (“dhalimin”), past, present and future. Allah (swt) curses them and warns them of the severest punishment that awaits them in this world and the tormenting Hell-Fire in the hereafter. They are mentioned 126 times in different chapters of the Qur’an and cover oppression at the individual, family, societal as well as economic and political levels. The Qur’an also contains stories of many strong and prosperous nations which were destroyed due to the oppression (“dhulm”) which prevailed in those nations. The same fate has also been seen of oppressive regimes in modern times which ruled through tyranny and merciless suppression.

DESTINATION

To quote only one verse in conclusion, verse 227 Chapter 26, Allah (swt) says, “And soon those who oppress and do injustice to people shall know at what evil destination they will end up.” This evil destination is both in this world and in the hereafter. World history throughout the ages has proved the truth of this verse. Tyrant oppressors have risen, fallen and perished in the most brutal form and condition in this world. Even the ancient pre-Islamic nations and communities such as those of “A’ad” and “Thamood” were destroyed due to oppression. Moreover, the most grievous and tormenting punishments are awaiting them in the hereafter.

Thus oppressing people constitutes a sin that results in the Divine Blessings changing into Divine Wrath.

GIVE UP THE PRACTICE OF DOING
VIRTUOUS/GOOD DEEDS AND INTENTIONS
("FAQAD AN-IRAD AL-KHAIR")

GOOD DEEDS

Good deeds are spontaneous acts of kindness, accommodation, generosity, benevolence, charity, assistance, help and sympathy .They also include acquiring more and more knowledge through reading good books, humility in one's behavior, patience in adversity and so on. The list is inexhaustible.

When these acts are performed with selfless heart and with no intention of receiving anything in return - reward or remuneration or even thanks - and done purely in the way of Allah (swt) ("fi Sabilil-Llah") and for obtaining His pleasure and mercy, the individual develops a high spiritual status before Allah (swt). When he forms the habit of performing such acts as part of his character, it indicates the quality of moral excellence and forms a valuable treasure of his life in this world and in the hereafter.

"SALEH/SALIHAN"

The Qur'an uses the Arabic word "saleh/salihan" which means good, righteous, pious, godly acts in about 40 verses spread over the Qur'an. The deeds are linked to the belief system and assure success and abundant rewards in the hereafter for those believers who act accordingly. We cannot possibly go through all these verses in this brief summary. Perhaps, one verse will serve as an illustration. Verse No.40 of Chapter 40says, "...whoever acts righteously, whether a male or a female, and

he/she being a believer, he/she will enter Paradise and will be provided with countless sustenance.”

CARE/COMMITMENT

When one forms such good habits of acting righteously and doing good to people, one should exercise care and commitment to keep the good habits and not to lose them. If one happens to lose them and go back to bad habits, one has committed a sin that will change Allah (swt)’s favors and kindness into His disfavor and wrath.

TURN AWAY FROM ALLAH ’S GRACE AND ABANDON THE PRACTICE OF DOING GOOD TO OTHERS (“NABAZ AL-IHSAN”)

HUMANITY

We have already defined good deeds in the previous section. Being kind and doing good and serving people are characteristic signs of the sense of humanity in a man. Allah (swt) loves and praises those people who do good and serve humanity selflessly. The Qur’an uses the word (“ihsan”) for such good deeds and the word (“muhsin”, plural “muhsineen”) for such people. They are mentioned at 24 different places in the Qur’an and are promised handsome rewards in this world and in the hereafter. Let us examine a couple of these verses and analyze what they say.

THE QUR’AN

Allah (swt) says, *“Those (the pious ones) who spend in charity both in prosperity and adversity alike and who suppress their anger (when they are wronged) and forgive the wrong doers*

(for their faults) are the ones whom Allah loves and they are the ones who do good to others (the muhsineen)." (Q. 3:134)

In another verse, (swt) says, *"And those who strive hard to serve Us (Allah), We will certainly guide them in Our ways and indeed Allah is always with those who do good to others. (This is obviously the most promising assurance for those who sincerely strive in the way of the Lord.)"* (Q. 29:69)

In this connection the Prophet of Islam (s) said, "A charitable person is near to Allah (he is loved by Allah), near to Paradise (entitled to enter the Paradise) and near to the people (he is loved by the people)..."

We should always be mindful that, through neglect or carelessness, we do not lose our spirit of doing good and serving others at any time. We should ever be eager to serve our fellow human beings. In fact, doing good is a form of worship of Allah (swt). It pleases Him to see that we do good and serve His servants ("ibadul- Llah"). The reward for such acts is indeed great.

SIN

Abandoning charitable acts and losing the spirit of service to humanity as a whole is a sin, and results in turning away from (swt)'s grace and changing His favors into disfavor and wrath. In the Du'a of Kumayl, we pray to Allah (swt) to forgive us of such sins.

UNGRATEFULNESS FOR ALLAH (SWT)'S BOUNTIES ("KUFR ANI-N'IMATIL LLAH")

THE QUR'AN

There are many verses in the Qur'an relating to the bounties ("n'imah") that Allah (swt), by His grace, has given to man. In verse 34 Chapter 14, Allah (swt) says, "And He gave you all that you had asked Him (that is, figuratively, He provided you with everything that was necessary for your nature and your natural capacities). If you attempt to enumerate those bounties you will not be able to count them. Indeed man is most unfair, unjust and ungrateful."

In verse 72 Chapter 16, Allah (swt) says, "...and We provided them with all the good things, while they believe in falsehood and disbelieve and deny in the bounty of Allah." Again, in verse 83 in the same Chapter, Allah (swt) says, "They recognize the bounties of Allah, and yet they deny them and most of them are ungrateful and deniers of the bounties."

Ungratefulness changes Allah (swt)'s favors into His disfavor and wrath and results in His punishment. This is evident from verse 28 of Chapter 14 in which Allah (swt) says, "Have you not seen those who have changed Allah's bounties with ingratitude and landed their people in the house of ruin, that is, the Hell-Fire in which they shall enter and that is an evil house."

In verse 211 Chapter 2, Allah (swt) says, "Ask Bani Israel how many of clear signs We have given them, and whoever changes Allah's bounty after it has come to him, Allah is indeed severe in exercising His justice." "N'imah" in this verse also means the Word of God ("Kalamul-Llah").

Gratitude increases the blessing and the bounties and ingratitude takes them away and is the cause of calamities and punishment from Allah (swt). This is clearly stated in verse 7 Chapter 14 which says, "And when your Lord announced, 'If you are grateful, I will, surely, increase My favors to you, but if you are ungrateful, My punishment is indeed severe.'"

In Du'a Kumayl, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) teaches us to beseech Allah (swt) to forgive us for our ingratitude for His bounties.

NEGLECT TO THANK ALLAH (SWT) FOR HIS BOUNTIES ("TARK AL-SHUKR")

PRAISE/THANKS TO ALLAH

First we should bear in mind that all praise and thanks ("hamd wa shukr") belong to Allah (swt) who is the First, without a first before Him and is the Last, without a last after Him. All the creation that exists belongs to Him and sings His song in praise and thanks to Him. Human beings are but a tiny part of His vast creation. He fashioned us, as He did all the rest of the creation, in accordance with His Will and made us evolve and progress up to the limit He has fixed. We cannot either go back or move forward beyond the limits He has fixed.

DEVELOPMENT OF FACULTIES

He assigned to each of us from His provisions known and apportioned nourishment. No one can increase or decrease the portion He has fixed. He endowed us with the faculty of speech and intellect, and perfected our creation in an excellent fashion. He blessed us with various bounties ("n'imah") for our physical and mental development for the fixed term of our life. He gave us the knowledge of praising and thanking Him.

BEASTLINESS

All praise and thanks belong to Allah (swt) for, had He withheld from us the knowledge to praise and thank Him for the lavish favors He has granted us, we would have been ungrateful. If such had been the case, we would have left the bounds of humanity and degenerated into the state of beastliness and become, as He says in the Qur'an, *"They are but as the cattle – nay, they are further lost from the way!"* (Q. 25:44)

KNOWLEDGE

All praise and thanks belong to Allah (swt) for the true knowledge He has given us of Himself ("irfan"), the sense of thanksgiving that He has inspired us to offer Him and the doors to knowing His Lordship ("Rububiyyat") that He has opened for us. He has guided us towards sincerity in our belief of His Unity ("Tawheed"). He has kept us far away from assigning His singular attributes which belong to Him alone to somebody other than Him ("ilhaad") and from holding doubts about His Commands in our minds.

All our praise and thanks are due to Him who will raise us up to the highest of the "illeyoon" which is kept in the high heavens and wherein the deeds of the righteous are recorded. Finally, it should be realized that it is impossible to praise and thank Allah (swt) ("kama haqqahu") as He rightfully deserves to be praised and thanked (Imam Sajjad (a), Sahifa as-Sajjadiyyah, Du'a No. 1).

OBLIGATORY

It is therefore obligatory upon us to be always in a state of praise and thanks to Allah (swt) for His countless "n'imah." The Qur'an has taught us to pray to Allah (swt) that *"...my Lord,*

inspire me to give thanks to Your blessings and bounties with which You have blessed me and my parents and that I may do good and righteous deeds which may please You ...” (Q. 46:15).

This Du’a can be read in full in the “qunut” of our daily prayers.

INHUMANITY

On the contrary, to neglect our obligation and abandon thanksgiving is inhuman and against the nature of things, when Allah (swt) at innumerable places says, as for an example in Chapter 62 verse 1, “Whatever there is in the heavens adores Allah and whatever there is in the earth (glorifies, praises and thanks Allah), the Sovereign, the All-holy, the All-mighty, the All-wise.”

WAYS OF THANKSGIVING

The various organs of our body and the marvelous ways in they work for the ease and the comfort of our life is a great blessing from Allah (swt).

Just to mention a few of these organs, let us consider the heart which performs many most important physical functions.

The way to thank Allah (swt) for the blessing of the heart. which performs many most important physical functions, is to beautify it spiritually by believing in Allah (swt) and His Prophets and their successors, the heavenly scriptures He sent down to His Prophets, and the Day of Resurrection.

The way to thank Him for the blessings of the eyes for their many wonderful uses, is to look at His beautiful creation and ponder over His Power and Might, study and acquiring knowledge, and abstain from looking at immoral and shameless scenes and pictures He has prohibited us from looking.

The way to thank Allah (swt) for the blessing of the ears by which we hear various sounds and speeches is to listen to the truth embodied in the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet (s) and adopt them in our daily life; in addition, to abstain from listening to backbiting, slander and false accusation, and rumor mongering concerning innocent people.

The way to thank Him for the blessing of the tongue for the ability to speak and many other functions is to speak humbly, respectfully and politely with good words; moreover, to employ the tongue in reciting the verses of the Qur'an and "zikrul-Llah", glorifying and praising Allah (swt), in remembrance of Him.

The way to thank Allah (swt) for the blessing of the legs for their wonderful movements which allow the body to move freely the way we wish, is to use them in going out to seek our "rizk", the sustenance that Allah (swt) gives us to sustain ourselves and our families, and serve the cause of Allah (swt) and be in the service of His servants ("ibadul-Llah"), the humanity as a whole.

The way to thank Him for the wonderful gift of the brain and the intellect and it's amazing structure, psychics and workings, is to allow our thought processes to go in the rightly guided directions and constructive thinking, and in the cause and welfare of Islam and humanity as a whole.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC GIFTS

The above are only a few examples of the human body and its wonderful working that Allah (swt) has endowed us. In fact, all organs of our body are meant to serve us in the most efficient and perfect way for our utmost ease and comfort. In his Du'a of the Day of Arafat, Imam Husayn (a) has described every organ of our body and their functions, and glorified and praised Allah

(swt) for His boundless mercy and beneficence as well as His perfect wisdom in the creation of man and the physical and spiritual endowments He has given him. All this is apart from the social and economic gifts that Allah (swt) has granted to human beings.

Allah (swt) gives abundance of material sustenance, far in excess of one's needs, and abundant wealth and riches to whomsoever He chooses. Similarly, He gives a high social status and a respectable ruling position in the society to whomsoever He wishes. These are all parts of the social and economic gifts for which man has to be most grateful and thankful.

COUNTLESS BLESSINGS

Referring to all the blessings and bounties that He has given us, Allah (swt) says, *"And He gave you all that you had asked Him (that is, He provided you with everything demanded by you nature and your original capacities), if you enumerate Allah's blessings, you will not be able to count them. Indeed man is most unjust, unfair and ungrateful"* (Q. 14:34). In the light of all that has been stated, neglect in thanking Allah (swt) for His countless blessings and bounties is indeed a great sin which changes them into His disfavours and become the cause of calamities as punishment from Allah (swt).

CONCLUSION

When we look into these five types of sins that, according to Imam Zaynul 'Abidin, (a), change Divine favors into Divine Disfavours/Displeasure, we see a common theme that runs through all of them and, that is, disintegration in morality and defiance of moral values. When man, who is the best of all of Allah (swt)'s creation, falls into the trap of Shyaitan and the sensual self that prompts him to doing evil ("Nafs-e-

Ammarah”), then his intrinsic nature of being good gives way to nourishing evil intentions and committing evil acts, losing all his sense of care and concern for the welfare of his fellow beings, and becoming heedless and defiant against Allah (swt).

Therefore, Allah (swt) not only withdraws all His favors out of His wrath but also changes them into disfavours, as a result of which man gets into various misfortunes and suffers from various calamities. He is reduced to a state of wretchedness and beastliness and ceases to be a human being the way Allah (swt) has originally created him.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER EIGHT

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK SUPPLICATIONS FROM ACCEPTANCE

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

قُلْ أَمَرَ رَبِّي بِالْقِسْطِ ۖ وَأَقِيمُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ عِندَ
كُلِّ مَسْجِدٍ وَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ الدِّينَ ۚ كَمَا
بَدَأَكُمْ تَعُودُونَ

Say: My Lord has enjoined justice, and (He has enjoined) to set your hearts (on him) at every time and place of prayer and call on Him, putting your sincere faith and devotion exclusively in him; as He brought you into being in the beginning, so (to him) shall you also return. (Q: 7:29)

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CHAPTER EIGHT

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK SUPPLICATIONS FROM ACCEPTANCE

Eighteen types of sins have been mentioned under this category that block supplications from acceptance by Allah (swt) according to various "riwaya" from our Ae'mmah (a), mainly from Imam Sajjad (a) and Imam al Sadiq (a) reported in various books of commentaries. These sins are as follows:

1. Bad/Evil Intentions ("Su' al-Niyyah")
2. Hidden/Concealed Vices ("al-Intiwa' 'ala Sifati Qabihah")
3. Low Opinion of and Mistrust of Brothers-in-Faith ("Su' al-Dhann")
4. Feelings of Hatred or Mistrust towards a Fellow Human Being ("al-Haqd")
5. Praising One's Self/Priding over One's Own Good Deeds ("al-'Ujub")
6. Show-off in Worship and Good Deeds to gain Praise/Respect ("al- Riya'")
7. Arrogance/Egotism/Pride ("Kibr/Istikbar")
8. Vanity/Snobbery ("Ghuru'")
9. Greed/Stinginess ("Bukhl")
10. Avarice/Materialism ("Hirs")
11. Desire/Crave/Lust ("Tam'a")
12. Envy/Jealousy ("Hasad")

13. Friendship/Love of Allah (swt)'s Enemies ("Tawalla' A'da al-Llah")
14. Duplicity/Double-faced/Hypocrisy ("Dhu Wajhain wa an-Nifaq")
15. Lack of Certainty (Doubt) in the Acceptance of Du'a ("Adam al-Taiqin bi Ijabati al-Du'a")
16. Delay in Praying the Regular Obligatory Salat ("al-Takhir fi A'dai Farida al- Salat")
17. Abandoning Charity and Good Deeds ("Tark al-Sadaqah wa al- Ihsan")
18. Rudeness and use of Obscene Language ("al-Fahsh wa al- Badha'")

When we go through the above list carefully, we see that it covers a wide range of sins that can be classified under six categories: Spiritual, social, ethical, economic, religious and political. We will discuss them very briefly under their respective categories as several of these topics are, in fact, subjects by themselves and can form separate chapters. We propose to provide a bird's eye view, so all these topics will be covered in two chapters to help us avoid them as they form obstacles to the acceptance of our supplications by Allah (swt).

The following are the categories under which we are going to discuss the sins. The classification depends upon how one views the nature of a particular sin. It can fall under several categories, depending upon what criteria are used to determine the assignment. However, based upon the common understanding of the terms, the following definitions have been used.

SPIRITUAL:

Relating to and affecting adversely or damaging the spirit or the heart/mind of an individual. The sins are listed above under items 2, 5 and 6.

SOCIAL:

Relating to all aspects of community life, interaction within the community, outreach activities and general welfare of the society. The sins are listed above under items 1, 3, 4, 17 and 18.

ETHICAL:

Relating to moral conduct and behavior as viewed by Islam and practiced, especially, in Islamic but also generally in any society as a whole. The sins are listed under items 7, 8, 12 and 14.

ECONOMIC:

Relating to financial aspects of an individual and affecting adversely his family and business finances. These sins are listed under items 9, 10 and 11.

RELIGIOUS:

Relating to Islamic beliefs and practices of an individual. The sins are listed under items 15 and 16.

POLITICAL:

Relating to government administration and rules/ regulations relating to the state and affecting adversely an individual's life, such as living under an oppressive system. Only one sin, item 13, is listed under this category.

As stated earlier, we will look at the broad outline of the individual sins and analyze them briefly. They can be studied in

detail from the various books of "Tafaasir" listed under Selected References at the end of the book.

SPIRITUAL:

Sins that relate to and affect the spirit or the heart

HIDDEN OR CONCEALED VICES ("AL-INTIWA" 'ALA SIFATI QABIHA")

Vice is a superlative noun which means extreme wickedness, criminal and immoral practices, shameful deeds, dirty tricks, corruption, serious and grave wrongdoings, and all other abominable acts. When these take hidden or concealed forms, they become extremely dangerous and harmful as they are committed under the cover of piety and goodness. It amounts to hypocrisy in its worst form since such a person carries a hidden dagger under the pretense of being a friend and a good man.

In whatever society these vices exist, they pose a great danger and disruption not only to its social health but also to the lives of the people. We have vivid examples of this happening today in our society everywhere in the world in all walks of life.

The Qur'an condemns such persons in Chapter two in a long series of verses running from verse Number 8 to 20. In addition, the Qur'an assigns a whole Chapter, Number 63, giving it the title of Hypocrites, on the qualities of a hypocrite. There are also many Hadith from our Ae'mmah (a) on this subject which describe the dangerous nature of this type of hidden and heinous wickedness.

Imam Sadiq (a) is reported to have said, "One who meets Muslims with a double face and dual tongue will on the Day of Judgment come with two tongues of fire." Imam Baqir (a) said,

"A worst servant of Allah is one who is, on the hidden side, a slanderer and defamer and, on the flip open side, a friend and a man of honor." (Paraphrased)

Double-faced is the characteristic feature of a person who is outwardly of a good behavior while inwardly is vicious at heart. He displays sympathy and friendship in front of the people but is an enemy behind their backs. Double-crossing is a vicious quality of a person who praises and flatters people whenever he meets them, putting up an appearance of a friend but denounces them and speaks slanderously of them, defaming them in their absence.

Several vices can take both hidden as well as open forms. While they are hidden inside the heart, they show up in an open form assuming a hypocritical characteristic, such as distrust/suspicion, hatred, self-praise, arrogance, greed, jealousy and befriending Islam's enemies. In whatever forms they are, they are reckoned as great sins. They should be avoided for the sake of our spiritual health and for being obstacles to the acceptance of our Du'as by Allah (swt).

PRAISING ONE'S SELF/PRIDING OVER ONE'S OWN GOOD DEEDS ("AL-'UJB")

DEFINITION

Our Ulama, high ranking religious scholars, have defined "ujb" as an exaggeration or overestimation of one's virtues and good deeds, accompanied with a feeling of superiority and deceitful pleasure and contentment on the one hand, and considering oneself free from all faults and vices on the other hand.

There are several stages of "'ujb". One commonly seen is when an individual considers himself as superior to others, and more

pious thinking his own faith to be sounder and immaculate than of other believers. He also thinks highly of himself as perfect and free from faults, and prides himself for being in the forefront in the performance of "wajibat", the obligatory acts and "mustahabbat", the recommended acts of worship.

Such a person treats others as inferior and insignificant human beings and looks at them with derision and disregard. He is not prepared to accept and, if he somehow does, tends to underrate the virtues and the good deeds of others. He criticizes and magnifies the shortcomings and faults of others but overlooks his own faults and misdoings. He looks down on the achievements of others and has a high opinion of, and magnifies his own meager achievements.

Admiring and glorifying oneself or priding over one's own good deeds in one's own heart or openly in one's behavior is another serious and great sin which is extremely harmful to one's spiritual health and, in the long run, can damage one's heart beyond repair. That person reaches the end of his life with a dead and diseased spiritual heart. "Ujb" ruins the quality of the deeds of human beings and is the main obstacle to their du'a being accepted by Allah (swt).

To get away from it we should, as a first step, realize that we are all servants of Allah (swt) ("'ibadul-Llah"). Our life and death are in His Hands. We get our sustenance from Him. We worship Him through His Favor and every good deed we perform is due to His blessings. Therefore we, as His servants, depend entirely on Him as our Lord. This realization is the first step towards getting away from the destructive sin of "ujb" or feeling proud and great within our minds for our beliefs and actions.

SHOW-OFF IN WORSHIP AND GOOD DEEDS TO GAIN PRAISE/RESPECT (“AL-RIYA”)

DEFINITION

“Riya” can generally be defined as a false and fake appearance for showing-off to other people as being pious, virtuous, pleasant mannered, suave, generous and charitable for the sake of earning their respect, honor, admiration and reputation. In “riya” there is a remarkable lack of integrity, uprightness, honesty, sincerity and piety. The purpose is solely to impress people so as to serve one’s selfish interest of appearing great and being big-hearted.

“Riya” is revealed in three different forms. In the first form, the person displays his religious beliefs and shows off his knowledge to impress others that he is a very knowledgeable scholar so as to gain their confidence and respect with the ultimate objective of taking advantage of them for personal gain and benefit.

In the second form, the person exhibits his piety and virtuous deeds openly in words and conduct so as to show himself as a man of integrity and high ranking while inwardly nourishing selfish motives. This form of “riya” is manifested in the performance of prayers and good deeds, strictly following all religious commandments and recommended acts (“mustahabbat”) and abstaining from all prohibitions and abhorrent acts (“makruhat”), to attract peoples’ attention to his piety and to win their confidence and favors. All such acts, whether performed in total or in part, to please others and win their trust is covert or open “riya” and is condemned and cursed by Allah (swt).

There are several verses in the Qur'an that contain the curse against such showy performance of worship and charitable acts. One of them is in Chapter 107, verses 4 to 7 which say, "Woe to them who pray, who are unmindful and neglectful of their prayers, those who do good to show off to be seen but refuse to give help (to the poor and the helpless whom they treat with unkindness and disrespect)." Imam Sadiq (a) said, "A person who performs worship and does good deeds, not for the sake of the pleasure and blessing of Allah but for the purpose of being considered a pious person by other people, and publicizing his good deeds so that they come to know about them will be counted among the polytheists who ascribe partners to Allah."

"Riya" in religious faith is the third form of "riya". This is the worst kind of "riya" and punishment for it is the severest. One who is guilty of this sin and does not genuinely believe or only pretends to be a believer is considered a hypocrite ("munafiq") whose place is in the lowest reach of the Hell(Q. 4:145). It is an open shirk (Polytheism) because while his religious beliefs and acts should be purely for Allah (swt), he does that to please others and seek their favors and admiration. As such, he makes others partners of Allah (swt), sharing in His pleasure which should be exclusively for Him.

However, if one believes firmly in all the religious tenets but only as a show off to win peoples' confidence and trust, or if one conducts oneself ostentatiously and speaks in self-praise, one is not reckoned as a hypocrite but a boast. However if one stays in this condition permanently, the light of faith will eventually fade away from one's heart and die out and the darkness of faithlessness and disbelief will occupy the heart. He finally dies as an unbeliever as he lost his faith while alive.

This fact is confirmed by a Hadith from Imam Sadiq (a) who reported that Allah (swt) said, "I am the best of all friends; one who makes others share in partnership with Me in any matter, his deeds are not acceptable to Me. I accept only those acts which are purely done for My sake." Therefore, in the light of what has been stated about "riya'", it is not surprising that it is a sin that blocks our du'as from being accepted by Allah (swt).

SOCIAL:

Sins relating to social and community life and interactions within and outside the community.

BAD/EVIL INTENTIONS ("SU' AL-NIYYAH")

DEFINITION

Intention can be defined as a thought process that runs in the heart or mind, giving shape to a purpose, aim, objective, design or an end that may or may not translate into action but remains as a thought in the mind. An intention can be good or bad. Good intentions are liked and admired while bad intentions are disliked and abhorred.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islamic ethics applied to a Muslim community requires Muslims to abstain from having bad thoughts or being suspicious of another Muslim. This principle is laid down, among other places, in verse 12 of Chapter 49 of the Qur'an which says, "O' you who believe, keep away from all sort of suspicions and speculations since, surely, in some cases suspicion or speculation is a vicious sin, a transgression and do not spy on or back-bite one another...therefore, be conscious and wary of Allah. Indeed, Allah is the one who is oft-forgiving when turned to Him in repentance and Most Merciful."

When we look closely into the above-mentioned verse, we see that it is clearly a commandment to the Muslim community to observe three basic ethical principles which constitute rights relating to human fellowship. The three principles can be stated as: one, keep away from having bad thoughts, doubts and suspicions of another religious or fellow human being and do not be skeptical of one another; two, do not spy into the life of another Muslim or an innocent fellow human being; and, three, avoid back-biting, meaning talking bad about another Muslim or an innocent fellow human being behind their backs.

These three basic ethical obligations in Islam play an important role in the progress and social well-being of the Muslim community and the society as a whole because they bring about peace and prosperity. Islam aims at establishing social discipline in the moral behavior of man by making the individual the most peaceful and desirable member of the human family. The main purpose is to bring about a world order in which peace, prosperity and ethical life of man can thrive and grow to raise him to the higher level of intellectual and spiritual attainments.

Islam holds life, property and honor of a human being in high regard, in particular, that of a Muslim as sanctified. This security extends further to the safety of being judged by others, which means that even in one's mind, one must not entertain bad and hostile thoughts about others. Islam prohibits any sort of doubts or misgivings which would lead to tainting the character of another person.

In this respect the Prophet (s) is recorded to have said, "Indeed, Allah has made sacred the blood, property and respect of a Muslim (from being destroyed by a fellow Muslim), and also from undermining them by engaging in evil thoughts." Islam is

the only religion that prohibits and protects man from this danger of being looked at with suspicious eyes or evil thoughts by others. No other worldly institution or power can do that as it is beyond their boundaries.

LOW OPINION AND MISTRUST OF BROTHERS-IN-FAITH ("SU' AL-DHANN")

Evil thoughts about others can cause several harms to the person who harbors such thoughts and suspicions about others.

Apart from the spiritual harm, the first harm is that the person's mental health is adversely affected.

The second harm is the damage that is done to the friendship and harmony among the people in the society and the resulting severance of relations. In this respect the Hadith from our Ae'mmah (s) says, "When the person whose evil thoughts about others take control over him, they will destroy peace and harmony that exists between him and his friends."

The third harm is the separation and removal from other people due to fear and anxiety. He will not be able to socialize with other people in the society. The Hadith says, "A person who does not correct his thoughts about other people will always be frightened of every single person."

The fourth harm is to his intellect and the thought processes ("Ghurur al-Hikm") which are adversely affected with the result that he is not able to think or judge logically and see the reality of the issue facing him.

The fifth harm is to the physical health of the person since the bad state of his mind will affect his health and will reduce his life span.

The sixth harm is that the people associated with the person who holds bad thoughts about them, such as his wife, children, friends, colleagues are frustrated to see that the person interferes in their lives and nourishes negative thoughts about them. The result is that he is hated and avoided by all those who are around him.

We conclude the discussion on this topic by a quotation from Amir al- Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibne Abi Talib (a) who said, "Base your opinion about your brother on goodness, unless otherwise proved." Hadith says, "We should look for seventy good qualities in the person before we even think of any bad thought about him."

FEELINGS OF HATRED OR MISTRUST TOWARDS A FELLOW HUMAN BEING ("AL- HAQD")

DEFINITION

"Haqd" means to harbor feelings of hatred, malice, spite, resentment, and rancor or to incite to hatred, resentment and embitterment. A simple definition would be: "Haqd" is a deep emotional feeling of intense dislike or extreme aversion or hostility that is rooted in man's instinct which is caused by the bad condition of the environment and the way we grow up that teaches us what to hate.

Hate is a natural response to the fear of the unknown. For example children as well as adults can be indoctrinated by their

parents, religious leaders, peers and role models to hate certain individuals or entities. Hatred is often associated with feelings of anger and jealousy and a disposition towards hostility and animosity vis-a-vis a person or group of people.

The consequence of harboring or nourishing such feelings is the severance of relations and animosity towards others, instead of maintenance and strengthening of ties of relationship, kindness and charity towards others. It poisons one's heart, mind and thought. It is a sin that deprives the person of Allah (swt)'s Mercy and blocks his supplication from reaching Him.

Several Hadith of the Prophet (s) and our Ae'mmah(a) have been reported about nourishing feelings of hatred against people. The Prophet (s) said, "Jabraeel came over to me and said, 'O' Muhammad, fear the hatred and enmity of people'" (Al-Kafi). Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), said, "The core of foolishness is nurturing hatred against people." He also said, "Hating people is the habit and practice of the foolish" ("Ghurar al-Hikam"). Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Avoid enmity of people because it causes hatred and discloses deficiencies."

MISTRUST

Chapter 49, verse 12 of the Qur'an says, "O' You who believe, avoid assumption or suspicion as much as possible, for suspicion in some cases is a sin." Lack of trust in and His "Awleeyah" (the Divine representatives), and brothers in faith in general is an explicit sin which is written in the Record of Deeds brought to account on the Day of Resurrection and punished severely.

The Prophet (s) said, "Allah is the one besides whom there is no God. I swear by Allah, no good in this world or in the

hereafter will be granted to any believer, except due to his good outlook and intentions towards Allah, his good behavior and his refrain from back biting and slander of his fellow believer. I also swear by Allah, there is no God besides Him, that Allah will not punish anyone after he has repented and sought forgiveness but for his bad attitude, lack of hope in the mercy of Allah, bad behavior and back biting his fellow believers."

The Prophet (s) continues, "I also swear by Allah, there is no God besides Him, that no believer who has good outlook and intentions towards Allah will ever receive less than what he expects from Him, since Allah is Benevolent and ample-giving and has the Authority over all that is good. As such, it would be unbefitting of Allah to act against the good outlook and expectation of His servant. Therefore, have a good outlook towards Allah and feel inclined towards Him." (Mishkat al-Anwar)

Correct systems of beliefs, excellent morality, exemplary behavior and full hope in Allah (swt)'s Mercy are the characteristic virtues of a sincere believer. His outlook towards Allah (swt) is full of hope and "Rajaa." He is forever optimistic whereas pessimism has no place in him. On the other hand, a believer who is a sinner, however great his sins maybe, can still repent sincerely and compensate for his sins, and should never be pessimistic and lose hope or have any doubt in the boundless Mercy of Allah (swt) and forgiveness after sincere repentance.

What is meant by optimistic and pessimistic outlook towards Allah (swt) is explained clearly in a tradition narrated by Allamah Majlisi. The tradition says, "A person should be hopeful of Allah's forgiveness when he repents for his sins. He should be confident when he turns to Allah that he will be accepted.

When he prays correctly and with concentration, he should be hopeful that his prayer will be answered. When he asks for help from Allah, he should feel assured that Allah is sufficient for him to help. And when he performs a good deed for the sake of Allah, he should be certain that Allah will accept his deed.” (Bihar al-Anwar) This is what is meant by optimism.

The opposite of it is pessimism. A person who is pessimistic towards Allah (swt) commits a major sin. This is a sin mentioned in Du’a Kumayl by Amir al-Mu’mineen (a). He says, “O’ Allah, forgive my sins that would cut off and destroy hope.” According to Imam Sadiq (a) these sins are: pessimism or hopelessness in receiving the Mercy and Compassion of Allah (swt), reliance on someone other than Him and mistrust in His promises.

A Muslim should look at his Muslim brother’s conduct favorably, however bad it may appear to him. It is not correct, in fact it is sinful, to look at others’ behavior negatively. If a Muslim sees his Muslim brother in a sinful place such as a casino or a bar or among a company of sinners, he should not assume that the person is also one of them. Rather, he should give him the benefit of being innocent unless he sees by his own eyes that the person is engaged in a sinful activity.

ABANDONING CHARITY AND GOOD DEEDS (“TARK AL-SADQAH WAL AL- IHSAN”)

CHARITY - BACKGROUND

Charity is a general term that covers a wide field of help and assistance ranging from a small and seemingly insignificant act of removing a stone or a brick from the side walk so as to save an unwary person walking from tripping over it and falling down, to running worldwide charitable institutions that help the poor, the widows and the orphans, the needy, the

destitute, the sick and the injured, the refugees from the war-torn countries, and the people stricken with natural disasters.

Charity provides a means of survival for millions of impoverished people, particularly, in the Third World countries where the majority of the poor people live under the most dire conditions and die in thousands every day, especially children who suffer from hunger and diseases, in spite of billions of dollars poured into these countries in aid.

In Islam all acts of charity rank as acts of worship ("Ibadah") and are either referred to as "Zakat" or "Sadaqah" given out directly or indirectly, as a religious obligation or a voluntary act respectively, in the way of and for the pleasure of Allah (swt). In Islam, "Zakat" is a form of obligatory charity tax that constitutes a pillar of faith. Similarly, "Sadaqah" is a form of voluntary charity that is highly recommended and results in an abundant reward from Allah (swt) in this world and the hereafter.

There are huge number of verses in the Qur'an and Hadith of our Ae'mmah (a) exhorting us to pay "Zakat" and "Sadaqah" regularly and never to fail or falter in discharging our obligations to Allah (swt) and the humanity as a whole as we are brothers of one another in humanity. Doing good to people and giving charity to the poor and the needy pleases Allah (swt) and ensures His abundant Mercy as well as ready acceptance of our prayers and supplications to Him. Charity, according to the Hadith of our Ae'mmah (a), prevents seventy kinds of calamities and takes away illnesses and grief.

Both of these Islamic terminologies of "Zakat" and "Sadaqah" have extensive and deeper meanings than the English word charity which, etymologically, has a Christian origin. Charity can

take many forms such as caring and looking after the sick, even visiting the sick and speaking a few words of kindness and empathy to them are all spiritually very rewarding acts. Helping a stranded traveler, educating an orphan, donating to causes that benefit the unfortunate indirectly such as donations to cancer research are other forms of charity. However, most forms of charity are concerned with providing basic necessities of life, such as food, water, clothing, health care and shelter.

Many charitable institutions have evolved which carry out the functions of providing the basic necessities of life to the poor as well as to orphanages, homeless shelters, food banks, religious institutions dedicated to the care of the poor, hospitals, hospices and nursing homes. These institutions facilitate those engaged in businesses, working class people and others who cannot themselves directly care for the poor and the needy to donate money to enable the institutions carry out their functions. Many retired professionals provide voluntary services to these institutions.

Against this background, with all available facilities to give charity, withholding or abandoning charity constitutes not only a great sin in the eyes of Allah (swt) but also an outrage against the spirit of humanity and goodness inherent in the nature of man. Man no longer remains a man when he loses this inherent attribute. Justice demands that all his prayers and supplications be blocked from reaching Allah (swt) in this world and he be subjected to severe punishment in the hereafter.

RUDENESS AND USE OF OBSCENE LANGUAGE (“AL-FAHSH WA AL-BIDHA”)

This category of sins includes all kinds of indecencies, obscenity, shamefulness, vile deeds, adultery and fornication (“al-

fuhsha'''). Words are spoken through the human faculty of speech. Bad words are spoken out of impudence and rudeness and they hurt the person to whom the words are spoken. They are usually in the form of backbiting, accusations, slander, spreading false rumors, swearing and using foul and obscene words.

Most of the human failings originate from or are committed by the tongue. Words can make or break a man. Good or bad words indicate the character of a person, whether he is good or bad. Speaking good and truthful words, guiding people towards goodness and helping the innocent through the power speech bring great rewards to man. On the other hand, bad and obscene words, and rude and impudent behavior ruin the reputation of a man and, consequently, he is looked down in the society.

Therefore, it is necessary that children are educated right from their childhood to build a strong moral character so as to get rid of rudeness when they talk and indecencies, obscenity, wickedness in their behavior, and sexual offences such as adultery and fornication. If the sins that block prayers are not committed, people in the society can leave in peace and security. This is, in fact, an elementary moral imperative and is required to be followed by every ordinary, civilized and cultured man and every one of their children.

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Among the signs that indicate the Shaytan's interfering in human activities is that the person becomes insulting and abusive. He has no fear of anything and does not care what he says and what is said about him." The Imam also said, "Abusive language is caused by saying what is untrue and the place of the untrue is the Fire of Hell." In some Hadith, Allah (swt) withdraws His blessings from the sustenance

of that person and terminates the facilities He has given him for his living.

The remaining categories of ethical, economic, religious and political sins that block the acceptance of Du'a by Allah (swt) will be the subject of the next chapter.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER NINE

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK SUPPLICATIONS FROM ACCEPTANCE (CONT'D)

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

هُوَ الْحَيُّ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ فَادْعُوهُ مُخْلِصِينَ لَهُ
الدِّينَ ۖ الْحَمْدُ لِلَّهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ

He is the ever-Living, there is no god but He, therefore call on/supplicate to Him, putting sincere and exclusive faith in him (be sincerely and exclusively devoted to his way); (all) praise is for Allah, the Lord of the worlds. (Q: 40:65)

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CHAPTER NINE

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK SUPPLICATIONS FROM ACCEPTANCE (CONT'D)

In this chapter we continue to discuss sins that block our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt) for His acceptance. We have four categories of sins left for discussion. These are: Ethical, Economic, Religious and Political. We will only discuss ethical sins in this chapter.

Several of these ethical sins have already been discussed in greater or lesser details under various categories in the previous chapters. Previously we discussed them from moral and spiritual aspects. They are also included in the category of sins that block our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt). However, instead of just mentioning them, we will benefit by briefly discussing these sins from the theological aspect to refresh our memories and also to increase our understanding of them.

ETHICAL:

Sins relating to moral conduct and behavior practiced generally in any society

ARROGANCE/EGOTISM/PRIDE ("KIBR/ISTIKBAR")

DEFINITION

Arrogance is defined as an attitude or sense of superiority displayed in a bossy behavior and speech by inflating one's own worth or importance. It is also shown or reflected in making undue claim of rank, dignity, power, elevating the self-worth or self-importance to an unjustified degree, and perceiving oneself as superior while holding others as inferior and denouncing them for their shortcomings. Intellectual arrogance is a mental condition whereby an individual lets his pride for being very smart in his field of life go to his head and become swollen-headed.

CAUSES AND FORMS

Arrogance can take several forms, common among which arise from being very rich; holding high social, political, intellectual or religious rank or position; having nobility in ancestry; possessing extraordinary merits; receiving high honors in any branch of science and technology or any field of knowledge; achieving extraordinarily high success in any field of business or industrial or commercial undertaking. These and other such causes give rise to arrogance and so can raise popularity, power and celebrity in any professional life.

The worst and evil type of arrogance is that which is shown in rejecting the Truth and acting in defiance of Allah (swt)'s rules, commandments and prohibitions and then feeling proud for violating Allah (swt)'s Word. Shaytan was outcast and cursed by Allah (swt) for committing this sin. Another worst type of arrogance is shown in trying to lower the high status of the

Prophets and the "Awleeyah" of Allah (swt), making them appear equal to us and belittling the values of their traditions.

This attitude was more prevalent during the time of our Prophet (s). Now-a-days the same attitude still persists but in a refined and intellectual form by those who claim to be highly educated and modern in their thinking, mostly coming from higher institutes of learning.

Arrogance in all forms is detestable. It can also generate many other vices. It gives rise to hatred and rancor in human hearts, disgraces man in the eyes of his fellow human beings and brings about ultimate humiliation for him. It compels others to retaliate and despise him for looking down on them.

ISLAM CONDEMNS ARROGANCE

Islam denounces arrogance as one of the great and unpardonable sins against Allah (swt). It defines it as psychic state in which a person feels a sense of superiority and behaves haughtily with others. Arrogance is considered as one of the most dangerous inner diseases of the heart and its destructive effects are reflected in the behavior and conduct of the person suffering from this serious sickness.

The Qur'an contains over sixty verses condemning arrogance ("kibr/istikbar") and arrogant people ("mustakbirin/mutakabbirin") and so do many Hadith of our Ae'mmah (a). We will mention only a few verses and Hadith relating to this topic.

THE QUR'AN

The translations of the verses given below are explanatory and some are paraphrased to facilitate their understanding.

Chapter 7 verse 36: "And those who deny Our Signs (interpreted to include the divinely appointed guides and their guidance) and, declaring their disrespect against and turning away from them, they shall be the inmates of the Hell-Fire and they shall remain in it forever."

Chapter 7 verse 40: "Indeed, those who deny Our Signs (interpreted as in the preceding verse) and proudly turn away from them disrespectfully, the gates of Heaven shall not be opened for them nor shall they ever enter the Paradise ... (it will be impossible for them to ever enter the Paradise)."

Chapter 32 verse 15: "Only those believe in Our Signs who, when reminded of them fall down in prostration to their Lord, raising His glorification by praising Him highly and never elevating themselves arrogantly." (It is reported that this verse was revealed about Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) and his true followers, the Shias.)

Chapter 40 verse 56: "Indeed those who dispute about the Signs of Allah without any authority that may have come to them, they have only vanity in their heart, a futile ambition or desire to become great which they will never attain. So seek protection from Allah. Indeed He is the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing."

Chapter 39 verse 59: "Yes, My Signs certainly came to you but you denied them and acted arrogantly, proudly and you were among the unbelievers."

Chapter 39 verse 72: "It will be said to them, 'Enter the gates of Hell to remain in it forever. Evil is the ultimate home of the arrogant.'"

Chapter 37 verse 35: "Indeed, they were the ones who, when they were told, 'There is no God except Allah' used to turn away, behave proudly, arrogantly."

Chapter 16 verse 29: "Miserable indeed will be the place to stay of the arrogant."

The story of the Shaytan given in detail in the Qur'an is well known. He was outcast, cursed and removed from Allah (swt)'s Mercy and doomed for punishment of the Hell-Fire for his arrogance. It is therefore obvious that an arrogant person is not only far away from Allah (swt)'s Mercy but is also doomed to be cast into the Hell-Fire to dwell in there forever. The Qur'an considers such a person as an unbeliever.

PROPHET AND AE'MMAH'S HADITH

Arrogance against accepting the Truth or Allah (swt)'s and His Prophet (s)'s Rules and Commandments is the same as Shaytan's action in disobeying and defying Allah (swt)'s Commandment to prostrate in front of Adam when His Spirit was blown in him. The punishment of such a person is the Hell-Fire and, in this world, he will be deprived of Allah (swt)'s Mercy.

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Glory, Dignity and Greatness belong exclusively to Allah. Anyone who tries to touch or break through this wall by his arrogance will be placed in the Hell." (Bihar al-Anwar)

When asked by the Imam's companion what arrogance is, the Imam Sadiq (a) replied, "The highest and worst degree of arrogance is belittling the truth and the people worthy ("ahl") of the truth." And when further asked how that is done, the Imam replied, "Belittling the truth is misinterpreting it and

admonishing or criticizing those who interpret it correctly and support it."

Imam Baqir (a) said, "When some amount of pride enters the heart of a person, his intellect is reduced by the same amount or even greater amount" (Bihar al-Anwar). Both Imam Baqir (a) and Imam Sadiq (a) said, "One who has even an atom weight of arrogance in his heart would not enter the Paradise" (Al-Kafi). Imam Sadiq (a) also said, "Indeed, there is a place in the Hell called 'Saqr' for the arrogant to dwell in. Owing to its extreme heat, it complains to Allah to allow it to take a breath. When it takes a breath and breaths out, it sets the whole Hell into a fierce fire." This is a metaphorical expression to give an idea of what "Saqr" is.

In fact, Allah (swt) in Chapter 74:27 says, "Wa ma adraka ma Saqr? And what will show you or make you realize what 'Saqr' is?" There are seven places where (swt) uses the words "wa ma adraka" to tell us that it is beyond the human power of perception to imagine what the place is.

While addressing a group of sinful and misguided people, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) in one of his short sayings said, "Between yourself and good guidance exists the veil of arrogance/egotism." It means the veil of arrogance/egotism blocks good guidance and advice from entering the mind of an arrogant person. His heart becomes opaque, so no ray of light of guidance can now enter.

The Imam has indicated how arrogance develops step-by-step in a man. The process begins with the love of the self. As the love of one's self increases to its highest point, the man becomes completely self-centered. He now perceives himself to be superior to all the rest. When this feeling of superiority

intensifies, the man becomes arrogant and considers himself to be at the top of the ladder, unreachable with all the rest of the people being below him. He now starts dominating them.

He perceives himself to be the standard of merits and importance by which others should be judged accordingly. Everyone necessarily falls short of the standard as he perceives himself to be the epitome of all values, merits and achievements.

Imam 'Ali (a) also said, "The worst and most destructible sickness of the intellect is pride." Therefore, pride/egotism/arrogance causes the impregnable veil to cover the intellect and becomes a barrier between him and Allah (swt). It blocks his supplication and communication to Allah (swt) and he is left to grope in the darkness of his arrogance and to finally fall from his self-perceived high status to total destruction.

In conclusion, unless the mind is cured of this disease and the soul is cleared of all the traits of pride/arrogance/egotism, it is not possible for a person to become worthy of achieving nearness to Allah (swt) and experiencing the taste of His Pleasure and Mercy and the spiritual radiance and shine in his mind.

VANITY/SNOBBERY ("GHURUR")

DEFINITION/DESCRIPTION

"Ghurur" literally means deception, delusion, illusion, conceit. However, the general and comprehensive interpretation of the word "gurun" used in the Qur'an as made by various interpreters says that any action and speech that does not carry any significant benefit is vain. This basic concept is extended to

include all frivolities and useless plays, singing, and music that are harmful. Some interpreters have construed it as polytheism while others have considered it as a great sin.

Vanity does not only mean idle talk and action but also idle, futile and baseless thoughts that take one away from the remembrance of Allah (swt). It also prevents one from pondering upon good and constructive things. All of these characteristics are summed up in the concept of one Qur'anic word, "laghw", which also similarly means vanity.

Vanity is a spiritual disease of the heart. It pollutes the mind that becomes oblivious of the realities of the materialistic world and its delusions. It then leads to excessive, temporary materialistic enjoyments and neglect of the permanent pleasures of the life in the hereafter. We shall limit our discussion to looking at a few verses of the Qur'an which point to these tendencies in human beings.

THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an contains about 27 verses relating to "ghurur", vanity, from which we can extract its various meanings and warnings to guard ourselves against contracting this disease. So let us look at the following few verses and their explanatory translations:

Chapter 3:185: "... and the life of this world is nothing but a setting up of vanity, the producer of delusion and false impression; it has no stability or reality in it."

Chapter 4:120k: "He (Shaytan) makes false promises to them (mankind) and he stimulates vain desires in them and gives them false promises, yet Shaytan does not promise them anything but deception."

Chapter 31:33: "... so do not let the life of this world deceive you, nor let the deceiver (that is, anyone or anything that diverts one from the path of Allah) deceive you concerning Allah."

Chapter 33:12: "And when the hypocrite, as well as those in whose hearts was a disease (of kufr), were saying, 'Allah and His Apostle did not promise us anything but deception, delusion.'" (The hypocrites had doubted the assurance given to them by the Prophet (s) about the ultimate victory of Islam against the most formidable forces of the enemy ("al-Ahzab"); the promise, they claimed, was only a deceptive measure adopted by the Prophet (s) to encourage them to face the enemy.)

Chapter 35:5: "O' people, Allah's promise is, indeed true. So do not let the life of this world deceive you, nor let the deceiver (anyone or anything that diverts one from the path of Allah) deceive you about Allah (taking His mercy for granted and going on and on committing sins after sins.)"

Chapter 57:14: "... you doubted in Allah's warning and your vain desires deceived you until the Decree of Allah came to pass (death) and the deceiver (Shaytan) deceived you concerning Allah (and made you commit sins after sins until death overtook you ...)"

HADITH

We will now look at a few, among numerous hadith of our Prophet (s) and our Ae'mmah (a) with regard to "ghurur" (vanity) and try to reflect upon what they said about it.

1. The Prophet (s) said, "The most honorable of people are those who restrain themselves from what is useless." (Shaykh Saduq, Al-Amali)

2. The Prophet (s) also said, "Peace of one's mind is achieved by keeping away from vain affairs." (Al-Bihar)
3. In a letter to Abdullah ibn 'Abbas, Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) said, "So follow what is beneficial and leave out what is vain." (Al-Bihar)
4. Imam 'Ali (a) also said, "Every speech in which there is no remembrance of Allah is vain." (Al-Bihar)
5. The Prophet (s) said, "Do not bring the flames of fire upon your faces by involving yourselves in vain activities." (Al-Bihar)
6. The Prophet (s) also said, "A good sign of a person's belief in Islam is giving up what is vain" (Shaykh Saduq, Al-Amali). Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Refrain from doing what is vain, for you will become miserable and detested." (Al-Bihar)
7. Imam Sadiq (a) used to say in a prayer, "O' Allah, Have Mercy on me (in granting me resistance) against sins totally in my life and be merciful to me so that I do not get into trouble due to doing what is vain." (al-'Ikhtisas)
8. Imam Baqir (a) said, "You should act with justice and do not fix the difficulties you face with unjust means and abstain from what is vain." (Al-Bihar)
9. Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) said, "A vain word in a speech and a vain act in conduct bring about evil consequences." (Al-Bihar)
10. Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) also said, "Recovering from the intoxication of vanity (ghurur) and heedlessness (ghaflah) is a lot harder than recovering from the intoxication of liquor." (Mizan al- Hikmah)
11. The Prophet (s) said to ibn Masud, "Do not get into neglect of Allah by being deceived by the feeling of

vanity (ghurur) for your own intense worship, knowledge and good deeds.” (Mizan al-Hikmah)

SUMMARY

To summarize, we can understand vanity better if we look at the other side of the picture, that is, at the people who are not vain. The qualities of those who avoid vanity totally, in all its aspects and forms, are that they are mindful of the realities of this life. They are fully aware of the transitory nature of this world and are not deceived by the worldly wealth, but rather, occupy themselves in virtuous deeds.

Verse 3 of Chapter 23 of the Qur’an gives us one of several qualities of the believers. The verse says, “And those who keep aloof from that which is vain.” In fact, all the activities and programs in life of such people have a useful and constructive purpose, because uselessness means futile, irrelevant and ineffective action. By contrast, people who are vain and snobbish (“maghrur”) do not care about the hereafter. They are heedless of what they do in this world. They believe in worldly pleasures and doubt about the life in the hereafter. It is obvious that vanity is a sin that blocks the Du’a from reaching Allah (swt) for His acceptance.

ENVY/JEALOUSY (“HASAD”)

We have partly discussed this subject in Chapter Three under Islamic Moral Issues (Ref. Pages). We will now discuss it fully as an Ethical Issue, quoting various verses of the Qur’an and Hadith of our Prophet (s) and the Ae’mmah (a) to show how “hasad” has been condemned as a great sin against Allah (swt) and why it blocks our Du’as from reaching Allah (swt), let alone getting them accepted.

WHAT ENVY ("HASAD") MEANS

Envy ("hasad") is a mental state in which the emotions and feelings of a person show that he is suffering from sickness or disease of the soul. Its symptom is that he wishes the blessing or the talent or the merit, whether real or imagined, which the other person has should be taken away from him.

WHAT JEALOUSY MEANS

Jealousy is another word that is also used for "hasad." It is a mild form of the same sickness of the soul but less destructive than envy. Although in Arabic both words are used to mean "hasad", the two have different shades of meanings.

To put it simply, jealousy is to want something that one does not have but the other fellow has it, while envy is to want the other fellow not to have it under any circumstance, regardless of whether or not one has it.

Envy is among the most destructive emotions which a person may have towards his fellow human being. It causes him to wish evil for the other fellow and to be happy when an adversity overtakes him. Another characteristic of this sickness is that it makes no difference whether or not the other fellow has that quality or possession, but he should not by any means have it. In a worst case scenario, the envious person can go as far as killing the other person when the intensity of the envy reaches its climax.

The last verse of Chapter 113:5 says, "And (I seek protection from the Lord) against the evil of the envious when he envies." One should therefore seek protection from Allah (swt) from the harm such an envious person can cause to one whom he envies.

SYMPTOMS OF THE SICKNESS

1. Inferiority complex - The person feels inferior to others whom he perceives to be better than himself intellectually, morally, materially, socially or in terms of achievements.
2. Superiority complex – The person, in contrast to feeling inferior, feels superior. He exhibits pride, self-admiration, and excellence in performance and expertise in all fields.
3. Depression and dejection – This state of mind generates a desire to destroy or harm other's merits, social or religious status, material wealth, great achievements and high reputation.
4. Evil and wicked mindset – In this state of mind the person intensely dislikes others who have any kind of material, intellectual, spiritual or social achievements which he may or may not have and desires that they should lose them even if it means losing whatever he himself has.

THE QUR'AN

*Envy/Jealousy is condemned in the Qur'an
in several verses:*

Chapter 4:54: "Or do they envy the people of what Allah has given them out of His Grace ..."

The background to the revelation of this verse is the promise of a kingdom given to the progeny of Prophet Ibrahim. However, the Kingdom was denied to the Jews who also belonged to the progeny of Prophet Ibrahim from Prophet Is'haq and instead went to the progeny of Prophet Ismail, the other son of Prophet

Ibrahim in accordance to the covenant made with Prophet Ibrahim. This was the cause of the envy of the Jews which intensified after their defeat in several battles that they fought against our Prophet (s), including the battle of Khaibar.

The gift given to the progeny of Prophet Ismail consisted of the Book, the wisdom and the Kingdom. Generation after generation has elapsed following Prophet Ismail through to the Last Prophet Sayyidina Muhammad (s) from the descendants of Hashim, son of Abdul Muttalib , but the promise has not yet been fulfilled. It will finally be fulfilled by the Last Imam, Muhammad al-Mahdi (a), from the pure progeny of Prophet Muhammad (s), who will be given this Kingdom. He will eliminate all the roots of oppression and injustice and fill the earth with Justice and equity.

The concept can also be extended to any bounties and favors that Allah (swt) provides to His servant. When it gives rise to envy in another man against the person who is the recipient of the blessings, it constitutes a clear sign of discontent and defiance against Allah (swt)'s choice of His servants to bless. This is a great sin since it goes against Allah (swt)'s Will. For Allah (swt) has, by His Wisdom, kept His bounties, favors, provisions for the maintenance of His servants ("ibaad") in His sole control. He apportions and gives them as He wills.

A true believer is satisfied and pleased with what he and others get. He is not envious of those who get more than himself. In fact he is pleased when he sees others getting more than himself. By contrast, a person who is envious of others who have been blessed with abundance of bounties is a rebel against Allah (swt)'s Will.

Referring to an envious person, Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Such a person neither belongs to Allah nor does Allah belong to him." The magnitude of the consequence of Allah (swt) disowning such a person and removing His Mercy and guardianship over him is such that there will be neither salvation nor intercession for him.

There are several evil impacts that envy has on the person who envies. We have seen the adverse impact on his fortune. In extreme cases it can provoke the person to harm the person whom he envies or even to commit murder.

In conclusion, to paraphrase what Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Indeed, envy/jealousy consumes belief the way fire burns out wood reducing it to ashes" (Al-Kafi). We have seen how thousands of acres of woodland are destroyed within a short time by a raging fire that sweeps across the woodland, destroying everything in its path.

The Imam also said, "The calamity that befalls belief and destroys it completely consists of envy/jealousy, self-praise and pride" (Al-Kafi). He also said, "The Prophet sought protection from Allah from six moral sicknesses. These are: suspicion, disbelief, arrogance, anger, oppression and envy." (Bihar al-Anwar)

Prophet Musa, Kalimul-Llah, was once talking and praying to Allah (swt) when he saw a man under the shade of Allah (swt)'s Emyrean ("Arsh"). He asked Allah (swt), "O' Lord, who is this man whom your Highest Heaven is shadowing him?" The answer that Prophet Musa got was, 'This man is one of those who are not jealous of what Allah has bestowed upon others.' In fact, a person who has noble moral traits would feel happy on account of the other fellow having excellent merits or

possessions and would wish that he always kept it, while at the same time desire the same for himself, regardless of whether or not he gets it.

It is therefore clear that envy/jealousy acts as a barrier that blocks Du'as from reaching Allah (swt) while, on the other hand, excellent moral qualities in a person raises his supplications to the High heavens to reach Allah (swt) for His acceptance.

DUPLICITY/DOUBLE CROSSING/HYPOCRISY ("DHU AL-WAJHAIN WA AN-NIFAQ")

DEFINITION

Hypocrisy has a variety of meanings. It is the act, claim or pretense of professing or holding beliefs, feelings, standards, qualities, opinions, behaviors, virtues, mindsets or other characteristics that do not, in actual fact, exist in the person. In other words, these are insincere, dishonest, double-faced claims of high principles or false pretense of possession of admirable qualities when the person does not, in fact, have them.

MORAL

Morally, hypocrisy is the failure to follow one's own expressed moral rules and principles; in other words, preaching what one does not practice. This is the characteristic of a person who assumes an outward appearance and fakes a behavior which is contrary to his inner state. As an example, a person may give an outward impression of friendship and affection and pretend to be sincere and sympathetic, while in his heart he nourishes the opposite feeling. In public, he shows admirable behavior and conduct, whereas in private he is wicked and vicious, a kind of Jekyll and Hyde personality.

SOCIAL

Socially, double standard is the quality of a person who praises and flatters people whenever he meets them. He interacts with them as a friend but denounces them and slanders and defames them in their absence. In religious terms, double standard or “nifaq” is manifested in these two ways; one is in speech and the other is in conduct and action.

These two features are among the prominent and weird characteristics of the hypocrites (“munafiqun”). Individually, when they meet anyone, their conduct towards that person will be to greet him double-facedly and speak with double tongue. Socially, his relations and interactions with others will be tense with duplicity and double-cross. They will lack truthfulness, sincerity, nobility and heartiness. Such a person lacks human qualities and on the Day of Judgment he will be resurrected as a companion of Shaytan and will live in the deepest valley of the Hell to burn permanently in the raging and roaring fire.

MANIFESTATION

There are several ways in which hypocrisy manifests itself:

One way is hypocrisy shows its self in a religious garb. The person appears as pious and religious in public in his interaction with people, while in private he is an irreligious and wicked person acting viciously and oppressing others.

A second way is that the person poses as a most virtuous and religious fellow to deceive and steal things from people. At other times, the person appears as the most trustworthy fellow in public to deceive people and then betrays the trust that people put in him and robs them of their money and other belongings.

A third way is that the person shows himself as righteous in his deeds, while his actions away from the public view are wicked and malicious.

A fourth way is that we see in our day-to-day life and interactions, people double cross one another and cause loss and harm, both among those who belong to the same faith and with others who belong to different communities and faith. They are all one in terms of being humans, irrespective of who they are.

In all its manifestations, hypocrisy is a grievous and great sin against God and humanity and is detestable in all its forms. It acts as a solid block against any supplication from reaching Allah (swt).

THE QUR'AN

The Qur'an is severe on hypocrisy ("nifaq") and the hypocrites ("munafiqun") and condemns it/them in the most stark and scornful words. The punishment for them is said to be the raging fire in the deepest burning valley at the bottom of the Hell (Q. 4:145).

The Qur'an contains numerous verses, running sometimes in series of ten or more verses, describing their qualities, their characteristic features, their conduct and behavior in public and private, and their contradictory words when they speak while they interact with believers and non-believers. We will look at a few of the verses to get a glimpse of the sin's severity and gravity.

The background of most of these verses revealed both in Makka and Madina is seen in the earliest Arab converts, including the chiefs of their tribes, who came into the fold of

Islam under the current prevailing circumstances and not by individual independent conviction. It was caused more by pretense, than sincere belief. It was all superficial show and never reached their heart.

The hypocrisy was not limited to one class but extended right across the board from religious, social, ethical to political fields. These hypocrites were those who had intense love of the material world. They strongly longed for political power and authority to rule over Muslims and amass wealth.

The rapidly spreading supreme ideology of Islam which developed under the comprehensive authority of the Prophet (s) shattered the hopes of the hypocrites of gaining hold over the people. This led them to become the hidden enemies of the Prophet (s) and the companions who were faithful to him.

These fellows were false and fake believers who, having failed to achieve their ambition during the lifetime of the Prophet (s), started to misinterpret and misrepresent the verses of Qur'an to suit their selfish aims and corrupt conduct immediately after his departure from this world. They usurped power and authority from the rightful successors of the Prophet (s) whom they oppressed, ostracized, imprisoned and finally killed by sword or poison.

We should bear in mind that hypocrisy might lurk in any heart which is not properly purified. Therefore every sincere believer, knowing that his heart is not pure to the required degree, should always guard himself against hypocrisy creeping secretly, unconsciously and imperceptibly in his heart.

Given below are a few main verses among numerous verses of the Qur'an relating to hypocrisy and hypocrites:

Chapter 2 verses 8 to 10 give the qualities of the hypocrites, their malice and false pride, illustrated graphically by simple similes and metaphors. Starting from verse 2, "And among the people are those who say, 'We believe in God and the Last Day (the Day of Judgment)' while, in fact, they are not at all believers. They seek to deceive God and those who believe, while they only deceive themselves but they are not aware."

The verses continue, "There is a spiritual sickness (envy/jealousy and hypocrisy) in their hearts, and God increases their sickness and a painful punishment has been kept for them because of the lies they used to tell." The series continues to Verse No. 20, all of which point to the same theme of spiritual sickness of hypocrisy killing the heart, and the hypocrites getting lost in a thick forest of spiritual darkness.

Chapter 4 verse 140: "... Allah will gather the hypocrites (munafiqun) and the non-believers (kafirun) in the Hell all together." One of the qualities of a hypocrite given in this verse is that they not only disbelieve but also mock at the Signs of Allah (swt). They are in this way worse than disbelievers. They will be grouped together in the Hell.

Chapter 4 verse 142: "Verily, the hypocrites seek to deceive Allah, while it is He who outwits them; and when they stand up for prayers, they stand up lazily (not sincerely), they do so only to show off to the people, and they hardly remember Allah." The hypocrites know inside their hearts that Allah (swt) is beyond being deceived. The verse actually indicates that they attempt to deceive believers.

The hypocrites imagine themselves to be good. They base their belief on their own imaginations and false conceptions. When they do any good deed, the purpose is to obtain worldly respect

and reputation, and gain goodwill of the people. They are acclaimed and honored by the people and expect Allah (swt) also to reward them for the good deed. Allah (swt) allows them to remain in their state of delusion and does not expose them. When they are finally found to be deceiving the people, it brings their downfall. People no longer trust or respect them.

Chapter 4 verse 145: "Indeed, the hypocrites will be in the lowest level of the Hell-Fire, and you will never find any helper for them." This is the worst stage of punishment. They deserve much more than this because they are the hidden enemies of Islam and the Prophet of Islam (s). Hidden enemies are worse than open enemies because of the tremendous harm that they cause to Islam.

Chapter 9 verse 68: "Allah has promised the hypocrites, men and women, and the disbelievers, the Fire of Hell, to dwell in it for ever. That is sufficient for them. Allah has cursed them and there is a lasting punishment for them." Whomsoever Allah (swt) curses, he is doomed to suffer terribly in the last stage of the Hell-Fire.

Chapter 9 verse 101: "And those who are around you among the desert-dweller Arabs are hypocrites, together with those among the peoples of Madina, they are obstinate and deep-rooted in hypocrisy. You (referring to the Prophet) do not know them, We know them and, We will punish them twice, and they will be given a grievous punishment."

Chapter 40, verse 35: "Those who dispute about the Signs of Allah without authority having been given to them by Allah are greatly hated by Allah and by those who believe; thus Allah sets a seal over every heart of those who are arrogant, haughty and tyrannical." This verse clearly states that those who defy and

disregard the Signs of Allah (swt) due to their arrogance, vanity, self-conceit and self-centeredness have spiritual dark veil cast over their hearts.

Their hearts have become completely opaque to the perception of the truth due to the sickness rooted in their arrogance and self-conceit. Such hearts are suffocated in the absence of spiritual light and eventually die. They are blind in this world and will be resurrected blind on the Day of Judgment and will be doomed to burn in the Hell-Fire forever. To use another simile, their hearts become like a closed container. Neither can the filthy contents in it come out nor can the clean and wholesome contents go in.

Chapter 63 verses 1 to 4 (Surah al-Munafiqun): The Surah takes the name from its main topic, the hypocrites (munafiqun), and gives their main characteristic features. The verses say, "When the hypocrites come to you (referring to the Prophet) and say that 'you are indeed the Prophet of Allah' and Allah knows that you are His Prophet and Allah bears witness that the hypocrites are indeed liars."

"They make shield of their oaths, and block and bar others from the way of Allah. Evil indeed is what they used to do. That is because they believed and then disbelieved and so their hearts were sealed, and that is why they do not understand."

The verses continue, "When you see them, their bodies marvel and impress you. And if they speak, you listen to what they say. They are like dry blocks of wood covered with cloth, set reclining against a wall. They assume that every cry is against them. They are your enemies, so beware of them. May Allah annihilate them, wherever, that is, in whatever direction, they stray away from the Right Path."

We conclude this chapter by quoting Hadith of Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), Imam Ridha (a), Imam Sadiq (a) and Imam Baqir (a).

According to Imam 'Ali (a), hypocrisy rests on, is supported by any one of the following four posts or pillars:

1. Worship of one's vain and immoral desires of worldly, materialistic attractions that pull man to commit sinful acts
2. Delay due to laziness in fulfilling religious obligations
3. Anger and
4. Greed

In addition, these four factors also bring down a thick veil over the vision of the intellect.

In reply to Muhammad ibn Fudhayl, Imam Ridha (a) wrote, "The hypocrites behave double-facedly in their relation with Allah. Allah knows it well and therefore leaves them alone (to their fate) ... They also double cross the Prophet and his pure progeny and the Mu'mineen and Muslimeen by professing outwardly that they are believers and concealing in their hearts their disbelief and lies. These are the people who are all cursec by Allah."

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "Among the signs of hypocrisy are: insensitivity, hardheartedness, inability to cry in tragedy owing to their callousness, persistence on committing sins and greed for the worldly wealth." These signs are so glaring in them that they cannot conceal.

Imam Baqir (a) said, "Verily, there are four kinds of hearts:

1. The heart in which there is both hypocrisy and belief;
2. The heart which is inverted and upturned;
3. The heart which is stained and sealed;

4. The heart which is clean and enlightened.”

The companion then asked the Imam, “What is the enlightened heart?” The Imam replied:

1. “The heart which is enlightened has inside it a shining lamp (reflecting genuineness and conviction);
2. The heart which has been sealed is the heart of a hypocrite;
3. The heart which is inverted and upturned is the heart of a polytheist;
4. The heart which is clean and shining is the heart of a true believer. When Allah favors him, he is thankful and when Allah tests him he is patient.” (Usul al-Kafi)

Finally, hypocrisy prompts an individual to take side with every group, good or bad, religious or irreligious, and thus turns the individual into a chameleon that takes on the color of the environment in which he finds himself, be it beautiful or ugly. A hypocrite is like a straw in the wind. He is swayed to the direction in which the wind blows and ultimately falls flat on the ground, losing his personal and independent freedom of thought and action.

We will discuss the remaining categories of sins that block our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt) for His acceptance in the next chapter. The categories are: Economic, Religious and Political.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER TEN

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK SUPPLICATIONS FROM ACCEPTANCE (CONT'D)

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَأَعْتَزُّكُمْ وَمَا تَدْعُونَ مِنْ دُونِ اللَّهِ وَأَدْعُو
رَبِّي عَسَىٰ أَلَّا أَكُونَ بِدُعَاءِ رَبِّي شَقِيًّا

And I dissociate (myself) from you and whatever you call on/invoke besides Allah; and I call upon/supplicate to my Lord; hopefully, I shall not be disappointed in calling upon/supplicating to my Lord. (Q: 19:48)

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CHAPTER TEN

FOURTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BLOCK PRAYERS FROM ACCEPTANCE (CONT'D)

In this chapter, we still continue to discuss sins that block prayers from acceptance by Allah (swt). They are categorized under:

A: ECONOMIC SINS SUCH AS:

- ✚ Greed/Stinginess ("Bukhl")
- ✚ Avarice/ Materialism ("Hirs")
- ✚ Desire/Crave/Lust ("Tam'a")

At some points, these sins overlap or merge into one another. Therefore, our discussion will apply to several common features of these sins.

B. RELIGIOUS SINS SUCH AS:

- ✚ Lack of Certainty (Doubt) in the Acceptance of Supplication ("Adam al-Taiqin bi ljabati al-Du'a")
- ✚ Delay in Praying the Regular Obligatory "Salat" ("al-Takhir fi a'dai Farida al- Salat")
- ✚ C. Political sin such as:
- ✚ Friendship/Love of Allah (swt)'s Enemies ("Tawalla' A'da al-Llah")

We will briefly discuss these sins under their respective categories.

ECONOMIC SINS

9. Greed/Stinginess ("Bukhl")

DEFINITION/ANALYSIS

Greed is defined as intense and excessive selfish desire for something, especially wealth, status, power or food.

When a man becomes greedy, he is overcome by extreme desire to acquire or possess far more than one's needs. It is said that it is "a bottomless pit which exhorts a person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching the end."

The purpose for getting greedy and any actions associated with it is possibly to deprive others of potential means of earning or basic survival and comfort or future opportunities or obstruct them from making progress. The purpose has an insidious or negative connotation of causing harm to others. Greed is therefore one of the major obstacles to eradicating poverty. When hearts of people are so intensely attached to the wealth and love of this world, the suffering of the poor, the needy and the hungry around them do not touch them and they do not therefore care what happens to them.

If everyone had the consciousness to take care of other unfortunate people suffering from poverty rather than buying something that they do not actually need, poverty would not have existed. Islam offers the path towards this goal by prescribing religious taxes such as "Zakat" and "Khums" based on wealth and income, respectively, as obligatory for all Muslims for distribution to the poor and the needy. In addition, Islam has highly recommended regular payment of "Sadaqah", voluntary charity, to the poor and the needy. If all Muslims were to fulfill their obligations and pay their religious dues

regularly, poverty prevalent among them today would be eradicated and the condition of their lives would be greatly improved.

CONSEQUENCE/CONCLUSION

Some of the consequences of greed are that they cause man to disregard and disparage Allah (swt)'s commandments and prohibitions. They also break the moral bonds between man and man. As result, man loses his sense of humanity by unlawfully consuming people's property and rights in the same way as fire eats up wood and reduces it to ashes.

Allah (swt) has preordained sustenance for man according to his wants. He obtains it by working for it legitimately and observing human rights and moral codes. When greed for more and more wealth overtakes him, he bulldozes all the rules to acquire wealth through illegitimate means. Today, we see many examples of this economic malaise all over the world.

Greed has been the underlying cause of the failure of several big corporations in the US history due to a number of white collar crimes, such as stock exchange frauds, insider trading, substantial losses in retirement and trust funds, and bankruptcies. Greed has also been the underlying cause of financial frauds such as fraud in insurance and other investment funds, Ponzi schemes and real estate frauds. Moreover, greed is the cause of bank robberies, identity thefts, medical frauds, credit card frauds, money laundering and embezzlement of cash.

Greed to make huge tons of money is the cause of buying out all the stocks of goods in the market and hoarding them to create artificial shortages in order to inflate prices. Household thefts and robberies by means of violence and trickery,

manipulation and misuse of authority to extract money are all actions that are inspired by greed. Greed is therefore the root of evils.

9. STINGINESS

DEFINITION/ANALYSIS

In the common language, the word stinginess means miserliness. Stinginess is a negative trait in human beings that prevents and discourages man from spending money or using possessions for his own wellbeing as well as for the welfare of his fellow human beings. Basically, it is motivated by greed and intense desire to pile up wealth for the love of it.

Stinginess is thus a side-shoot of greed and is closely associated with it. The Arabic word for stinginess is "bukhl." It can take a worse form when in addition to being stingy, one tries to dissuade and prevent others from giving in charity.

ISLAMIC PERSPECTIVE

Islam lays down a basic principle of social and economic equity and justice which requires that money and material wealth should not accumulate but should be spent and used for one's wellbeing and the welfare of the society as a whole. If these assets circulate among people in the society, they benefit the society as a whole both socially and economically.

Islam also considers all wealth, possessions and property obtained and earned by legal means as given by Allah (swt) in trust. In that wealth there is a share of Allah (swt), His Prophet (s) and his pure progeny, as well as a share for his own self and his family, and a share of mankind in general among whom are the orphans, the needy and the stranded travelers. In Hadis-e-Qudsi Allah (swt) says, "The rich and the wealthy are My agents

and representatives (wukalayee) and the poor and the needy are My family ('ayalee)." Man, as Allah (swt)'s servant, has the duty to follow His Owner's instructions and commandments with regard to its usage.

THE QUR'AN ON GREED AND STINGINESS

The Qur'an contains approximately 20 verses on the subject of greed and stinginess. Let us look at a few outstanding verses and draw conclusions from them.

Chapter 3:180: "And let those who are stingy in giving what Allah has granted them of His Grace, consider that it is good for them; no, on the contrary, it is bad for them; they will be shortly seized with what they have been stingily holding back (without spending in the way of Allah); to Allah belongs the heritage of the heavens and the earth; and indeed Allah is fully aware of what you do."

There cannot be a more severe warning against holding back that which one can spend on the needy out of one's wealth.

Chapter 4:37: "Those who are stingy and advise other people to be stingy as well and conceal whatever Allah has given them out of His grace, and we have prepared a humiliating punishment for the disbelievers."

Allah (swt) condemns and warns of a humiliating punishment for those who are stingy and, worse still, advise other people also to be stingy, while they hide their possessions from people and do not spend in the way of Allah (swt).

Chapter 9:34/35: "... Those who stockpile gold and silver and do not spend it in the way of Allah, inform them of a painful punishment on the day when these shall be heated in Hell-Fire and shall be branded on the foreheads, their sides and backs

and they will be told, 'this is what you amassed for yourselves, so taste what you hoarded up.'"

Islam dislikes unlawful acquisition of wealth and its hoarding and warns of severe punishment for those who do it. Islam allows Muslims to acquire wealth lawfully and to accumulate it after paying all the obligatory taxes such as "Zakat" (the prescribed poor-rate payable on the net wealth) and "Khums" (one-fifth on the net annual savings) as well as "Sadaqah" to the poor and the needy for the pleasure of Allah (swt). (Q. 8:41)

Chapter 92:8/11: "And for him who is stingy and considers himself free from need (that is, independent of Allah) and denies the best (the Truth), We will surely facilitate, make way for him to get into affliction and hardship. His wealth will not benefit him when he passes away from this life."

A stingy person tends to neglect the life of the hereafter and ignores to provide or prepare himself for the afterlife due to his stinginess to spend for any charity until he passes away. Such a person tends to deny the Truth and lacks sincerity in his heart. He will be disqualified from receiving any mercy from Allah (swt) on the Day of Judgment. No amount of wealth amassed in this world will benefit him on that Day. Only the purity of faith and goodness in deeds will help in obtaining relief from the Hell-Fire.

Chapter 104: "Woe is to every slanderer and defamer, who amasses wealth, counts it over and over, and hoards it. He expects his wealth will make him live forever. No, never, indeed, he will surely be thrown into the 'Hutamah' (consuming and crushing disaster) ..."

The background to the revelation of this verse is in respect of the person called Walid bin Mughaira who used to defame the

Prophet (s) by spreading rumors against him. He was motivated by another person called Akhnas bin Quraishi who was very rich but greedy and stingy. That led Akhnas to amass his wealth, thinking that it will make him live forever. He was obsessed by his economic power and social influence which made him arrogant.

Akhnas found the Prophet (s) gaining power and popularity rapidly by his propagation of Islam. In order to counter his influence he used Walid, who was good in the art of spreading false rumor and defaming and slandering people, to spread false rumor against the Prophet (s) and defame him and lower his respect in the eyes of the Muslims. This is the characteristic feature of the rich people who are faithless. They enjoy looking down and slandering the pious and poor people. This also serves as a warning to the believers to guard themselves against falling victim to these qualities.

10. AVARICE/MATERIALISM (“HIRS”)

DEFINITION/CONSEQUENCE

While “bukhl” and “hirs” have different shades of meaning in Arabic, there is only one word in English, greed, for both. However, avarice is more acute and so is defined as insatiable extreme greed for materialistic wealth and riches accompanied by intense miserly desire to amass and hoard it. Avarice is such a deadly disease of the heart that it finally destroys a person. Such a person is completely absorbed and sunk into his occupation, working day and night to make more and more money and hoard it until he is finally overtaken by death, leaving behind all that wealth which he hoarded all his life, neither spending it for himself and his family nor giving it in charity to the poor people around him. Avarice has plagued the

market today, specially the stock market, and plunged corporations into heavy losses to the extent that several of them were on the verge of bankruptcy and had to be rescued by the Government which gave them huge amount of money to continue to operate.

MATERIALISM

What does materialism mean?

Materialism is an immoral mental condition which expels love, respect, empathy and understanding of hunger and homelessness from the heart of a person who is inflicted with this condition. He becomes obsessed with material things and physical comforts such as money, expensive and fashionable cars, posh buildings in most expensive locations, and delicacies in food, as opposed to the spiritual and emotional values in life.

CONSEQUENCES

Deep attachment to materialism that causes negative sufferings such as self-importance, self-elevation, arrogance, pride, prejudice, anger, aggressiveness, and race for material gains is the main cause of miserable life for human beings in this world. When the mind is wrapped and totally absorbed in acquiring material wealth, attention is completely diverted from other important things in life, especially for the life of the hereafter.

In chapter 57:20, Allah (swt) says, "Know that the life of this world is only a sport and a play and a distraction, a glamour and a glitter, and a mutual rivalry and show off among you for wealth and children ... while in the hereafter there is a severe punishment and [also] forgiveness from Allah and His

pleasures, and the life of this world is nothing but a stuff of fantasy and illusion."

The real life of the hereafter is traded in for not even a penny's worth of an illusory life of this world. The realization will only come when the curtain falls on this life at the time of death. Various types of sports and games have occupied the most important place in modern lifestyle and the countries' economies as people spend millions on them. Children waste a lot of their study time not only watching but also playing various games.

Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) is reported to have said to Ammar al-Yasir, "O' Ammar, do not be upset in respect of this world, for all amusement of this world is in six things: (paraphrased to show the harm they cause in modern times. Originally the quotation was to show the dirt from which they originate.)

- ✚ Eating (rich food causes sickness)
- ✚ Drinking (delicious beverage causes sickness)
- ✚ Dressing (in expensive, stylish and latest fashion clothes waste time and money)
- ✚ Wedding (wives to provide sexual pleasures causes distraction/deviation)
- ✚ Riding (fancy cars in modern times is the main cause of fatal road accidents)
- ✚ Fragrance (expensive perfumes for sweetness of smell take away a big portion of income)."

11. DESIRE/CRAVE/LUST ("TAM'A")

Several meanings have been given to the Arabic word "tam'a." Among them are greed, desire, crave, covet, ambition, aspire,

lust and hope. The Qur'an uses the word "tam'a'" nine times, some in the positive and others in the negative sense. Here the word "tam'a" has been used in a negative sense of greedy desire and lustful longing. (Positive and legitimate desire or hope is acceptable and praiseworthy.)

Lust is an emotion or feeling of intense desire for a thing. It can take any form such as the lust for sex, power, popularity, expensive delicacies of food, posh residence and superb and unique possessions. Lust is a powerful force producing intense wanting for an object or an opportunity for fulfilling an emotion such as an uncontrollable sexual lust. It becomes an addiction and is the first step toward committing adultery, rape and fornication and even killing in a worst case scenario.

In chapter 24 verse31 Allah (swt) says to the Prophet (s), "And say to the believing women to lower their eyes, guard their private parts and not display their beauty and make up or any kind of beautification except what is natural and apparent, and draw their veils over their chest ... and not to walk with their feet in a manner so as to indicate what is hidden of their ornaments ..." The purpose of all this is not to stimulate sexual desire and lust in men, and give any kind of indication of immorality and lack of chastity in women.

Let us look at one verse from a few verses from the Qur'an as an example of the negative use of the word "tam'a":

Chapter 33:32: "O wives of the Prophet; you are not like other women. If you have fear of Allah, do not be too obliging or affectionate in your speech, lest he in whose heart is a disease may lust for you, but be serious and restrained in your speech."

The warning in this verse is not to be too friendly or pleasing in your speech or behavior lest someone is moved with lust or a

bad desire. As the wives of the Prophet (s), they were expected not to display their beauty or personal beautification, but to show moral and spiritual excellence in their character. In this there is guidance for all women that they should keep their distance from men and not give the slightest, unconscious indication of an immoral desire when they interact with men.

Let us now look at a few Hadith of our Ae'mmah (a) which explain further and emphasize what the Qur'an says about "tam'a."

Imam Sajjad (a) said, "I see all the goodness, righteousness in keeping away from the vain desire and crave for acquiring the wealth and position that others possess" (Bihar al-Anwar). This Hadith instructs us to avoid nourishing such selfish desire of acquiring the property that other people possess. Indeed, it is immoral to nourish such a desire.

Imam Hadi (a) said, "Lust is a very obscene negative attribute or quality in a person." This Hadith condemns lust as indecent, lewd and offensive quality in a person. It makes the person immoral with a very low integrity and untrustworthiness in the society.

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "If you want to feel happy at heart and delighted, and gain goodness and virtue in this world and in the hereafter, do not long for what others have" (Bihar al-Anwar). This Hadith shows us the way of getting a satisfied and tranquil mind so as to enjoy life with what one has without having the slightest desire of acquiring what others possess.

Imam 'Ali (a) said, "One who wants to live all the days of one's entire life free from all kinds of unhappiness should not give place to any sort of craving or longing in one's heart" (Majmu'l-

yi Warram; al-Hikmah). Indeed, how true and pragmatic is this hadith for our guidance in the way we should live our lives.

To summarize, we have briefly discussed the economic sins which block our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt) consisting of greed/stinginess ("bukhl"), avarice/ materialism ("hirs") and desire/crave/lust ("tam'a"). We have seen that greed is central and cuts across the rest of the sins which are subsidiary or the outcome of it. They all have harmful effects on the economy at the individual, national and international levels.

We will now analyze the next categories of sins which are the religious and political sins that block our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt).

RELIGIOUS SINS

15. LACK OF CERTAINTY (DOUBT) IN THE ACCEPTANCE OF DU'A ("ADAM AL-TAIQIN BI IJABATI AL-DU'A")

When a person starts developing a negative attitude in respect of the mercy of Allah (swt) in granting him any legitimate wish when he supplicates, it amounts to sinning against Allah (swt) because His Mercy is boundless. It embraces and manifests itself in all His creation. When a person begins to doubt the acceptance of his supplication for any reason, or lose hope completely owing to his wants being unfulfilled in spite of supplicating repeatedly, he should understand that this is because of committing a certain sin which results in his supplication being blocked.

Imam 'Ali (a) said, "... if you knock the door repeatedly (with positive attitude, hoping for the mercy of Allah), the door (for the acceptance of the supplication) will finally open one day." The Prophet (s) said, "Prayer, supplication is a tool of a believer and a pillar of his faith." There are numerous Hadith of our Ae'mmah (a) that give hope to those who experience hardship in getting their supplications accepted by Allah (swt). What are required are patience, perseverance and a positive attitude.

Allah (swt) assures us of His Mercy and Forgiveness at numerous places in the Qur'an. Let us look at a few examples:

Chapter 2:186 Allah (swt) says, "When My servants ask you (O' Prophet Muhammad) about Me, tell them I am very near to them. When they call Me in their prayers, I hear them and answer their prayers ..." Chapter 27:62 Allah (swt) says, "Isn't He who answers the afflicted when he calls Him and relieves the pains and grief, and makes you the successors in the earth? Is there (other) god besides Allah? Little is what you reflect!"

Chapter 39:53 Allah (swt) says, "O' (Prophet Muhammad) tell My servants who have committed extravagances or excesses (asraf) upon their own souls, should not at all lose hope in the mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah would forgive totally all sins committed; Allah is the Oft-forgiving, the Most Forgiving."

It is evident from the numerous verses of the Qur'an that Allah (swt)'s mercy is limitless. He is such a merciful God that He does not wait to punish the sinners but rather pardons them when they seek forgiveness from Him. Notwithstanding the fact that He says He would punish the sinner for an atom weight of the sin committed, yet His justice is tempered with mercy. He grants His mercy to whosoever He pleases.

Allah (swt) actually invites sinners and even encourages them to hasten in seeking His pardon. He does not want any sinner who has come to Him in time and in a state of humiliation to seek His pardon go back disappointed. He would even wipe out all sins committed by a person if He so wished.

Chapter 11:114 Allah (swt) says, "And supplicate (pray Salat) at dawn and sunset and at the early hours of the night. Surely, the good deeds take away, wipe out the evil deeds, virtues destroy vices; this is a reminder for the (believers who are) mindful, aware (of their Lord)."

The above verse assures the person who has lost hope in getting forgiveness for his sins and getting fulfillment of his wants that by doing good deeds Allah (swt) will compensate for the evil deeds, by wiping them out in return. So one should never despair or be doubtful that one is condemned to one's bad state forever. In this respect, the Prophet (s) has given us a Du'a to recite after every "Salat."

In this Du'a we say to Allah (swt), "O' Allah, Your power of forgiveness supersedes my evil deeds and the infinity of Your mercy is far greater than my sins. O' Allah, in case my sins that I have committed against You are so huge that they have deeply displeased You, Your power of forgiveness is such that it would override my sins, and Your forgiveness is much greater than my sins. O' Allah, if I am not worthy of Your mercy, Your mercy is worthy and limitless that it envelops me and covers me completely; indeed Your mercy is such boundless that it surrounds everything that exists."

The establishment of the obligatory prayers five times a day gives the exclusive and matchless chances to Muslims to ask for the forgiveness of their sins and the acceptance of their

supplications. The Prophet (s) said, "The likeness of the prescribed five times of prayer is that of a river flowing at every door and the person who takes a bath in it five times every day, that is, prays regularly and punctually, cleanses himself from the dirt of all sins committed by him during the day."

16. Delay in Praying the Regular Obligatory "Salat" ("al-Takhir fi a'dai Farida al-Salat")

IMPORTANCE OF "SALAT"

"Salat" is a unique form of prayer in Islam that cannot be compared with any other form of prayer performed by people of all other religions. It offers a unique experience for a person praying "Salat" who understands the true meaning and the philosophy behind each element of "Salat" and follows all the disciplines that have been laid down for its correct performance. A person who prays "Salat" realizes the overwhelming presence of Allah (swt) under whose imposing glory he feels a nonentity and stands in total humility, prostrating before Allah (swt) as His most obedient, poor, helpless, humble servant, seeking protection from his Lord. He experiences the taste of the higher spiritual elevation.

IMPACT

The powerful inner impact generated in such a person absorbs him completely in the spirit of Almighty Allah (swt) and finds him covered by the mercy of the Most Merciful. The mind gets tranquility and the soul rests in peace all the time because of the daily prayers that he performs. In addition, "Salat" has many mental, psychological and physical benefits and instills disciplines of punctuality, morality, ethical and humane values. "Salat" has also a powerful force that produces spiritual, mental and moral reforms in a person who prays with inner and deeper

understanding and in accordance with the outer and inner disciplines.

MERITS

Islam lays great emphasis on "Salat." Prophet Muhammad (s) said, "The first thing about which man will be questioned is the Salat." He explained that "Salat is a pillar of faith. If it is accepted, all other acts of worship are accepted; but if it is rejected all other acts of worship are rejected." There are more than 70 verses in the Qur'an that stress the importance of establishing regular "Salat." The "fitrah", the natural spiritual nature in a human being, which makes him submit to All-Powerful Lord causes him to prostrate before his Lord. "Salat" is the expression of a man's quest for the grace of his Creator and prays to Him to grant His grace to him. The Lord says in the Qur'an that He is very near to His servant ("abd") and his supplication and responds to His servant's supplication and grants him his needs. (Q. 2:186)

The Prophet (s) said, "To Allah the performance of an obligatory prayer (Salat) is equivalent to performing one thousand Hajj and one thousand Umrah correctly and acceptable to Allah." He also said, "The most beloved action before Allah is to pray Salat immediately on time." He also said, "One who does not give importance to Salat and considers it insignificant is worthy of punishment in the hereafter."

Imam Sadiq (a) said, "One who does not give importance to Salat and considers it insignificant will never receive our intercession." The Imam also said, "Anyone of our Shias who does not recognize the importance of Salat and denies our rights, ceases to be our Shia." Not to pray knowingly and regularly the obligatory "Salat" due to negligence (yet claiming

to believe in it) is a sign of disbelief and, according to the Prophet (s)'s Hadith, the status of that person is between Islam and "kufr." It means that the person is outside the parameters of Islam and near to its denial ("kufr").

CORE

Total submission to Allah (swt) is the underpinning or core of Islam. This finds expression in "Salat" which is the essential element of Islam and cannot be separated from it. The degree of submission depends upon our realization of the Greatness and the Majesty of our Lord. Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an, *"Successful indeed are the believers who are submissive in their Salat"* (Q.23:1/2). A Muslim cannot remain a Muslim if he neither prays nor cares for "Salat." Sadly if he prays at all, he does so heedlessly.

The Qur'an condemns such a person strongly in the following verse: *"And woe to the worshippers who pray Salat but are heedless, careless of their prayers"* (Q. 107:4/5). This verse applies to all those people who pray irregularly, unpunctually in spite of the prescribed times as well as to those who pray only occasionally when it suits them or just to show off that they are pious.

Imam 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) said, "People who disregard the prescribed prayer time, allowing it to lapse beyond its time limit, are hypocrites." The daily obligatory prayers have been prescribed according to their fixed time and it is a sin to delay beyond it and praying "kadha."

Awareness: The Prophet (s) said, "Salat is the Me'raj (Spiritual Ascension) or elevation for a Mu'min." "Salat" is thus the source of spiritual orientation and self-purification, raising us spiritually to the state of awareness or realization of Allah (swt).

It contains the essential components for our spiritual progress and development without which we would spiritually stagnate.

GIFT

Finally, "Salat" is a precious gift for the "Ummah" that the Prophet (s) received when he went on the Spiritual Ascension of "Me'raj." It is our prime duty to hold it in high esteem and establish it as an essential part of our life. Failure to do so will result in the loss of this precious gift with terrible consequences for our life in the hereafter. Allah (swt) says, *"Establish Salat and do not be among the polytheists."*(Q. 30:31)

PUNISHMENT

The Qur'an gives a scenario of a dying man, twisting one leg around the other in extreme pain and agony, as the punishment is further intensified. The Qur'an gives the reason for his terrible condition in Chapter 75:31. The verse says, "For he neither believed nor gave charity, nor prayed the prescribed regular Salat." The punishment starts from the time of his death and continues after his death until he is resurrected on the Day of Judgment. There are several verses that show that the final destination of those people who do not pray is the Hell-Fire. Chapter 74:40-43 give a graphic scenario of a person who is suffering in the Hell-Fire for, among other sins, not praying the obligatory daily "Salat."

BARRIER

Owing to His boundless Mercy and Grace, Allah (swt) has done us a great favor by giving us the "Salat" as a means of acquiring mental tranquility, self-reformation and self-purification in this world and of a great reward, forgiveness of all our sins and salvation in the hereafter.

In view of all these favors, our procrastination, neglect, defiance and heedlessness would amount to disrespect, denigration and belittling of Allah (swt)'s favors and His injunctions. It is therefore not surprising that our negative response to the call of Allah (swt) to pray would block all our supplications for fulfillment of our needs and wants.

POLITICAL SINS

13 .FRIENDSHIP/LOVE OF ALLAH'S ENEMIES (“TAWALLA’ A’DA AL-LLAH”)

MEANING

The equivalent Arabic meaning of the word friendship is “wali”. The plural of “wali” is “awleeyah.” The word has several meanings from the linguistic as well Islamic point of view. They include helper, supporter, benefactor, friend, close associate, relative, patron, protector, guardian, master, proprietor, possessor and owner. From the Islamic point of view, it means one who is devout, dedicated servant of Allah (swt) and close to Him. Derivative of “wali” is “Wilayah” which means sovereign power, guardianship, legal power, administration or government.

In Islam, as a general rule, the true “Wilayah” is only Allah (swt)'s, All-Powerful, All-Knowing, Absolutely Independent (“Samadiyyah”). As an extension to this rule, Shias believe that there are two types of “Wilayah”:

1) “Taqwini” which means God-given universal or pre-ordained “Wilayah” that encompasses the whole creation;

2) “Tahriri” which means Legislative or Law-making, Administrative “Wilayah” that governs all the worldly affairs. The Prophet (s) and his divinely appointed Twelve Khulafa and

Imams from his pure progeny are the true spiritual and the worldly guides for the "Ummah". They are the true inheritors of the Prophets and the representatives of Allah (swt) as such they are endowed with both "Wilayah", the "Taqwini" as well as the "Tahriri."

On the other hand, the mainstream of the Ahlul Sunnah do not accept this concept, but none-the-less respect the Imams of the Shi'a faith. They are not the enemies of the Ahlul Bayt.

However, a small group among them headed by Ibn Taymiyya came up with a new and false ideology. They consider that it is "shirk" to build a shrine or visit the grave of the dead. The group is known as Salafis. Abdulla ibn Wahhab of the Saudi dynasty became a student of Ibn Taymiyyah and went on demolishing the shrines, stopping and killing Shias who were the followers of the Imams of Ahlul Bayt.

According to them, the true Khulafah were from the Umayyad and later the Abbasid dynasties that came to power after the rule of Khulafa al- Rashidun ended with the martyrdom of 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) in the year 56 A.H. The Umayyad and the Abbasid Khulafah were known to be the enemies of the divinely appointed Imams from the Prophet (s)'s pure progeny. Those who belong to this sect among the Sunnis, such as the Wahabbis and the Salafis and others who are the followers of Ibn Taymiyyah, are and have proved to be also the enemies of Ahle Tashayyu by their attacks and killings of the Shias and destruction of the shrines of the Imams.

Therefore, associating and forming friendship with such Muslims who are enemies of the true Imams from the Ahlul Bayt and their followers would be a sin that blocks our Du'as from reaching Allah (swt).

Linguistically, the word "Wilayah" has several additional meanings to what have been stated above, such as, relationship pertaining to mutual attachment, solidarity and affection in which each individual would be the friend and protector of the other. In this sense, the "wali" would be that person or entity that one regards as one's friend and ally with whom one would associate and who could be relied upon to protect and defend one against one's enemies.

The social, economic and defense pacts which various countries friendly to one another enter into for their mutual benefits are examples in today's world of politics. If these countries oppress their populations, it will not be legitimate to be friends, help or cooperate with them.

Let us look at a few examples of what Allah (swt) says in the Qur'an with regard to the friendship which some people keep with those who are enemies of our faith and of Allah (swt).

THE QUR'AN

Chapter 5:55: "Indeed, your guardian (Wali) is but Allah and His Prophet (Muhammad) and those believers who establish prayer and pay the obligatory charity (while they are in a state of bowing down (ruku') in the worship of Allah" (interpreted as referring to 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) who gave charity in the state described in this verse, as reported by both Shia and Sunni sources).

The above-mentioned verse clearly establishes the true love of Allah (swt) and of His divinely appointed successors with whom we should establish our allegiance and to whom we should be attached both physically and spiritually. In the Shi'a faith, this is termed "Tawallah" which is a rational and natural principle of

faith and practices. Opposite of this is "Tabarraḥ" which means hatred or aversion against the wicked people.

Chapter 5:51: "O' you the believers, do not take those Jews and Christians who are your enemies as your friends (Awleeyah), indeed, they are friends of one another, and whoever among you who takes them as friends, he becomes one of them. Verily, Allah does not guide unjust people."

We see this happening in real life. When friendship gets intense and brings the individuals close together, it exerts great influence on them as they are tied to the promise of sincere mutual love and willingness to sacrifice for one another. Islam wants its believers not to come under the influence of wicked people and unbelievers ("kafirun") thereby endangering their faith. Therefore, it has provided a safeguard by making it an obligatory act of worship to stay away from such people.

While the first verse cited above states who our friends are so that we should love and pledge our allegiance and attachment to them, the second verse cautions us as to who our enemies are so that we should avoid all association with them. Interaction at social or commercial levels for maintaining social and business etiquette is appropriate but friendship in any form of emotional attachment such as loving or being affectionate to them will constitute a sin that blocks the Du'a from being accepted as well as contravenes the doctrine of "Tabarraḥ" as stated above.

Chapter 2:257: "Allah is the Friend (Wali) of those who believe (here the word friend does not have the ordinary meaning of the word; rather it means Allah as the Creator is the Protector of His creation). He takes or guides them out of darkness into light. And those who disbelieve (kuffar), Shaytan and the

oppressors are their friends. They take them out from light into darkness ..."

This is what a friend does. He guides his friends from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge. An enemy does the opposite. He takes his friend out of the light of knowledge into the darkness of ignorance.

Chapter 60:1: "O' you who believe, do not take my enemy and your enemy for friends, submitting to them your love and affection, while refusing to accept the Truth (Islam) that came down to you ..."

This is a clear injunction forbidding friendship with the enemies of Allah (swt) and the enemies of the believers. It is another verse which establishes the doctrine of "Tabarraḥ" which has been explained above.

Chapter 58:22: "You will not find people believing in Allah and the Last Day (of Judgment) being loving and affectionate towards those who oppose and disobey Allah and His Prophet, even though they happen to be their own fathers or their own sons or their own brothers or their own family or their own relatives. They are the people in whose hearts Allah has engraved faith and strengthened them with Divine Spirit and purified them Himself ... Allah is pleased with them, and they are pleased with Him. They belong to Allah as His friends. Let it be known that those who belong to Allah as His friends are the successful ones."

This verse establishes the criteria by which a true believer is distinguished from one who is insincere and falsely puts up a show of being a believer. It also declares that a true believer is always supported with the spiritual power from Allah (swt) who

guides him in all his affairs and situations in life in making the right decisions and taking the correct course of action.

Chapter 48:29: "Muhammad is the Messenger of Allah; and those who are with him (sincerely loving and supporting him as his close companions) are severe (in their dealings) against disbelievers, but merciful and compassionate among themselves as true friends of one another ..."

The verse gives the virtuous qualities of the true friends of Allah (swt) and the pious and virtuous people. On the other hand, it also gives the vicious qualities of the enemies of such beings and forbids befriending them.

CONCLUSION

Making friends with the enemies of Allah (swt) is a symptom of the disease of the heart. It is an inherent nature of a human being to like goodness and love good virtuous people, and dislike and hate wickedness and vicious people and the wrongdoers who are the cause of crimes such as murders, rapes, child abuse, robberies with violence and rampant killing of innocent people, including school children. The Qur'an calls such people animals, indeed, worse than animals.

On the other hand good, virtuous and pious people are given a respectable and high status in society. People love and trust them, and hold them in high esteem. This phenomenon applies politically to all levels of society from the individual and community levels to the national and international levels. Nations are respected for treating other nations with respect, fairness and justice and for their generosity and ever readiness to help at all times.

It is therefore obvious that making friends, praising and treating sympathetically the enemies of Allah (swt) and the wicked, vicious people and the oppressors of humanity block our supplications from reaching Allah (swt). The Qur'an and the Hadith of our Prophet (s) and A'emmah (a) forbid us to befriend them for the sake of our own moral and spiritual well-being here and in the hereafter.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER ELEVEN

FIFTH CATEGORY OF SINS:

SINS THAT BRING DOWN MISFORTUNES AND AFFLICTIONS

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

وَإِذَا أَنْعَمْنَا عَلَى الْإِنْسَانِ أَعْرَضَ وَنَأَىٰ بِجَانِبِهِ
وَإِذَا مَسَّهُ الشَّرُّ فَدَّوْا دُعَاءِ عَرِيضٍ

And when We bless man with (our) favors , he is disregardful
(and) turns aside ; and when distress befalls him, he makes
lengthy and intensive supplications. (Q: 41:51)

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

FIFTH CATEGORY OF SINS: SINS THAT BRING DOWN MISFORTUNES AND AFFLICTIONS

Three categories of sins have been mentioned by Imam Zainul-'Abidin (a) that are the causes of misfortunes, sufferings and afflictions coming down on man:

- ✚ Abandoning or Stopping Aid to those suffering from Afflictions and Oppression ("Adam Ighastul Makrubin wal Malhufin")
- ✚ Failure to respond to the Call for Help of the Afflicted and Oppressed People ("Khidhlan al-Mazlumin")
- ✚ Giving up the Act of Enjoining Good and Forbidding Evil Practices ("Tark al-Amr bil-Ma'ruf wa Nahi 'anil-Munkar")

1. Abandoning or Stopping Aid to those suffering from Afflictions and Oppression ("Adam Ighastul Makrubin wal Malhufin")

2. Failure to respond to the Call for Help of the Afflicted and Oppressed People ("Khidhlan al-Mazlumin")

AFFLICTIONS AND THEIR MAIN CAUSES

Afflictions of various kinds come as divine test in the form of trials and tribulations for mankind. Two main causes are ascribed to them:

Firstly, man's actions in creating various types of disruptions, such as in the eco system by releasing huge quantities of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere from factories, refineries and millions of cars running on the roads round the clock throughout the world.

Secondly, they also result from spreading malice on the earth, destroying lives and property, waging wars and bringing about rampant killings, and oppressing the weak and the poor at all levels of the society.

Allah (swt) says in chapter 30 verse 41, "Mischief has spread over land and sea on account of what the hands of men have wrought that He (God) may make them taste a part of what they have done so that they may turn back from evil."

This verse indicates that the miseries, tortures and other setbacks which man suffers in this world is partly the consequence of his misdeeds. They are meant to set an example and correct the behavior of man so that he gives up his evil actions. They are also meant to serve as warning that the sins he commits will put him into eternal punishment in the hereafter.

Divine tests that include various kinds of trials and tribulations, afflictions, hardships, and setbacks are mentioned in almost 40 verses in the Qur'an. They are for the purpose of testing patience and perseverance of the believers in order to ascertain their faith in Allah (swt) and His Absolute Divine Justice which is tempered with His Divine Mercy and Beneficence for His true believers.

Allah (swt) says, *"We shall certainly test you with a little or partial affliction of fear and hunger and loss of wealth and lives and fruits (referring to the loss of children), and give glad*

tidings, good news to those who bear them with patience.”(Q. 2:155)

The following two verses, No. 156 and 157, state their handsome reward and their high spiritual status which is further raised as they successfully go through additional tests which take them to the position of excellence and nearer and nearer to Allah (swt).

Verse No. 156 says, “... give great and glad news to those who are patient and who, when misfortune falls on them say, ‘indeed, we belong to Allah, and surely we shall return to Him.’” These are the words a believer says when he is beset with misfortunes. They indicate the sole purpose of the life of a believer.

The following verse No. 157 says, “Those are the people who get the blessings and the Mercy from their Lord and they are the ones who are the rightly guided.” The verse indicates the very high spiritual status of such believers and their nearness to their Lord.

In chapter 67:2 Allah says, “He (referring to Allah) who created death and life so that He may test to see who is best amongst you in the quality of his deeds; and He is the Exalted in Might and Oft-Forgiving.” The analysis of this verse reveals two noteworthy points. First, He has created death before life; so death is part of the creation which extends to life, and again to death, and finally to a permanent life. Second, He has given us the power of discretion and the intelligence to choose between what is the best in quality among the deeds; the test is to see whether we succeed by using that power fruitfully or fail to use it and suffer the consequences.” In this world, man experiences in his individual and personal life happy days as

well as unhappy days; he sees fortunes as well as misfortunes come and go; the cycle continues up to the end of the life her.

Poverty, pain, hunger, loss in income, property, and family members, sickness, and misfortunes which man suffers during the course of his life in this world are this life's common characteristic features. Life in this world is a package mostly of sadness and sorrows. Joys do come but only at times and are short-lived. While the 'ups' are rare, the 'downs' are more common and stay for a comparatively longer time. They cause disturbance and disruption in the pattern of man's personal life. In this lies the test for tolerance and perseverance in which man unfortunately tends to fail. The Qur'an expresses this in chapter 89:15-16: "And for man, when his Lord tries him by bestowing His bounties (n'imah) on him so as to honor him, the man says: 'my Lord has honored me.' But, when He tries him by restricting his sustenance, he says: 'my Lord has disgraced me.'" It is clear from these verses that Allah (swt) tries man by granting him prosperity on the one hand and afflicting him with adversity on the other hand.

When man enjoys prosperity instead of showing humility and kindness, he becomes arrogant and proud with his worldly possessions, forgetting that it is Allah (swt) who granted him that prosperity; while suffering from affliction instead of showing patience and faith in Allah (swt) when He withdraws His bounties, he becomes bitter and resentful and complains against Allah (swt) for being cruel and unjust to him.

This is a world of cut-throat competition and involves constant struggle to survive. This life is a chain of never-ending changes and transformations, of trials and tribulations and the survival of the fittest. Allah (swt) says, "... you shall never find any change in the course of Allah, nor will you see any variation in

the course of Allah" (Q. 35:43); this is repeatedly stated in several verses in the Qur'an to emphasize the rule of Allah (swt)'s laws.

When things are going on well, human beings often tend to forget to remember Allah (swt). They generally become heedless and forget the source of blessings and good things which they enjoy in their life. They live in security and protection, thinking that these are the product of their intelligence and smartness.

Giving an example, Allah (swt) says, *"And when distress befalls you in the sea (during a severe storm when huge waves rock the ship and raise fear of the ship sinking) and when your smartness and intelligence are of no avail, He (Allah, alone) rescues you and brings you to the shore when you call for His help, but when you are rescued you disregard Him and turn away from Him, indeed, man has always been ungrateful."* (Q. 17:66/67). Man is not safe either on land or at sea. This theme appears at several places in the Qur'an to repeatedly remind man to turn to Allah (swt) as his Protector and Guardian.

Trials, tribulations and sufferings have several benefits. A few of these benefits are:

1. They help the person reconnect with Allah (swt) and remember Him as the source of all goodness that he enjoys in life and thank Allah constantly and glorify Him in gratitude for the blessings and goodness he gets from Him.
2. The soul is purified as sufferings have a strong impact on it since the person repents and seeks forgiveness for the sins committed and refrains from committing further sins and turns back to Allah sincerely and in

total submission. In chapter 5:39, Allah (swt) says, "And he who turns to Allah repentantly after having committed injustice and oppression and reforms himself, then Allah surely turns to him mercifully and pardons him. Indeed, Allah is Oft-Pardoning and Merciful."

3. The person becomes aware of the love of Allah (swt) and realizes that He tests those whom He loves the most to see if they bear the miseries with pleasure considering that they come from Allah (swt).
4. The person hopes to be rewarded for his patience as he knows that great rewards are waiting for those who are successful in their tests. These rewards have been promised by Allah (swt) at several places in the Qur'an such as in chapter 28:54, He says, "They will be given their reward twice for their patience and perseverance. They perform good act to keep away from evil act and spend for the cause of Allah out of what We have provided them."
5. The tests aim at differentiating those who are sincere believers from those who are hypocrites, only pretending to believe while having disbelief in their hearts. In chapter 29: 2/3 Allah (swt) says, "Do people think that they will get away by saying, 'we believe,' and that they will not be tested? Indeed, We tested those who were before them. So Allah surely knows those who are true, and He knows those who are liars." The aim is to see whether those who claim that they have faith practice what they profess. No individual will ever succeed by mere acceptance of faith without disciplining himself in line with the requirements of faith.

RESPONSE

People who are suffering in various parts of the world as a result of the actions of human beings in general as outlined above or natural disasters happening partly also as a result of man's actions in polluting the air, deserve our sympathy and look forward to receiving help from individuals and organizations who have been spared from these calamities and are able to help.

It is but human to show kindness, care and compassion. Social ethics and moral obligation require fellow human beings to come to the aid of the afflicted when they call for help. They also include those who are living and suffering from the yolk of oppression of the despotic rulers and internal insurgency and fighting. Several countries in the world, especially in the Middle East, are victims of such calamities and afflictions and people die in thousands every day due to violence and hunger. They include both women and children.

Today we have many individuals who are rich donors running their own charitable trusts as well as other public and private humanitarian charitable organizations run by Christians as well as Muslims - among them Red Cross, Red Crescent, Islamic Relief USA, and Life for Development - working constantly all over the world. In addition, several rich nations who are ever ready to respond to the calls coming from any afflicted and suffering people from any part of the world help them in providing food, shelter and medical aid.

The Qur'an commends them and says, "... indeed, Allah rewards the charitable" (Q. 12:88). In another verse it says, "*Indeed, the charitable men and the charitable women, and those who give to God virtuous loan (give liberally in charity to help in the way*

of Allah), what they give will be multiplied for them and there is generous reward for them.” (Q. 57:18)

There are many such verses in the Qur'an. The above two verses have been given as examples.

HADITH

There are numerous Hadith on this subject as well. We will only take a few as examples in order to see how important Islam considers this subject. The Prophet (s) and all our A'emmah (a) have emphasized charity in their sayings.

The Prophet (s) said, “A Muslim who gets up at dawn (after spending the night sleeping in comfort) without being concerned with and attempting to solve the problems (including that of oppression) facing Muslims is not regarded as Muslim.”

The Prophet (s) also said, “Allah said, ‘By My Glory and Might, I would certainly take revenge on the oppressor immediately or at any time; and I would surely take revenge on the one who saw a person being oppressed and refused to help him in spite of being able to help him.’” (Kanz al-Ummal)

Imam Sadiq (a), “A Muslim who relieves his fellow Muslim from his grief, Allah will relieve him from his torments and regrets in the hereafter, raising him from his grave in a state of happiness and joy. And one who feeds a hungry fellow believer, Allah will relieve him from his hunger by feeding him with the fruits of the Paradise. And the one who quenches the thirst of a fellow believer, Allah will quench his thirst by “Rahiq al-Makhtum” (the most delicious and choicest drink, sealed for purity, exclusively reserved for the people of the Paradise).” (al-Kafi)

Imam Sadiq (a) also said, "One who responds by coming to the help of his thirsty and afflicted Muslim brother begging for help, and quenches his thirst, relieves him from affliction and helps him in meeting his wants, Allah bestows seventy two blessings on him, one of which is given to him here in this world to redress his life and seventy one are reserved for him in the hereafter to relieve him from the dreadful disgraces and the terrible horrors of the Day of Resurrection." (al-Kafi)

Imam Sadiq (a) also said, "The action of a Mu'min (a believer) in helping an oppressed person ranks higher and is more preferable than fasting for a month while in a state of "i'tiqaf" in Masjid al-Haram in Mecca (spending the month while staying in the Sacred Masjid in a state of worship); a Mu'min helping his Mu'min brother when he is able to do so, gets Allah's help in all his affairs in this world and in the hereafter; a Mu'min who, in spite of being able to help his Mu'min brother yet does not help, Allah will abandon him in this world and in the hereafter." (Thawabal A'mal/Mizan al-Hikmah)

On the one hand, helping the afflicted and the oppressed people is so important in Islam that it carries countless virtues; on the other hand, indifference, disregard and stopping to help the needy is such a great sin against Allah (swt) and humanity that it is severely punishable in the hereafter.

The importance of helping the oppressed can also be seen from the advice given by Amir al-Mu'mineen, 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a), to his sons, Imam Hasan (a) and Imam Husyan (a), during the last minutes of his life on the 21st night of the month of Ramadan when he said to them, "Be strong and staunch opponents of the oppressors and constant and consistent helpers of the oppressed." (al-Kafi)

In another Hadith, Imam 'Ali (a) said, "When you see a person being oppressed, help him against the oppressors." He also said, "The best act of justice is to help an oppressed person" (Ghurar al-Hikam and Mizan al-Hikmah). As the Shias of Imam 'Ali (a), this advice applies to all of us. It is our religious and moral obligation to follow it.

The Prophet (s) said, "One who would recover from the oppressor the right of an oppressed person which had been usurped by the oppressor would be my companion in the Paradise." (Bihar al-Anwar)

Failure to respond to the call of people who are suffering from afflictions and oppressions not only constitutes grievous sin against God and humanity but also blocks supplications from reaching Allah (swt).

3. GIVING UP AND ABANDONING THE ACT OF ENJOINING GOOD AND FORBIDDING EVIL PRACTICES ("TARK AMR BIL-MA'RUF WA NAHI 'ANIL-MUNKAR")

DEFINITION

"Amr bil-Ma'ruf" and "nahi 'anil-Munkar" are two integral parts of Shia belief system consisting "shari'" lawful ("halal") acts.

"Nahi 'anil-Munkar" is defined as dissuading, telling believers not to do and keep away from acts which are evil, detestable, hateful and religiously ("shari'" unlawful ("haram") acts.

These two acts are obligatory ("wajib") in the same way as are "Salat", "Saum", and "Hajj".

OBLIGATION

Every Muslim is obliged and required by the Qur'an in several verses to be good in behavior and ethics, to perform good deeds, and also to tell and instruct fellow Muslims to do what is right and good and to forbid them to do what is bad and evil.

Starting from the individual to the family and the community levels, this obligatory act for all Muslims, when carried out sincerely and with pure intention ("ikhlas") in obedience to the commandment of Allah (swt), could transform the Muslim society into a respectable, high social and spiritual status, apart from reflecting the true Muslim character in the society as a whole.

We will look at a few verses of the Qur'an and analyze them to illustrate the importance of this concept at the individual, the family, the society and the overall humanity levels.

Chapter 3:110 "You are the best group who has been created for mankind; you enjoin good and virtuous acts and forbid bad and evil acts, and you believe in Allah ..."

Although the obligation of enjoining good and forbidding evil acts applies to all Muslims of both genders, it is obvious that they all cannot fully fulfill this obligation because the conditions attached to performing them cannot be met by every Muslim. As we shall see, the first of these conditions is that the person should possess full knowledge of this subject and himself perform good and virtuous acts and abstain from all evil and sinful acts.

The Qur'an, while addressing all Muslims, points out a specially selected group among the Muslim community, made up of men and women who have been purified by the Creator Himself (Q.



33:33), to carry out this great and onerous mission among all Muslims. It is a mission that requires devotion, commitment and great sacrifice when it comes to the honor and integrity of Islam against the enemy's abuse and bad language.

There are several examples of this in the Islamic history. The one that comes to the forefront is that of the Grandson of the Prophet of Islam (s), the great Martyr Husayn ibn 'Ali (a). He was mercilessly killed together with a small band of companions and family members in their defensive battle against a huge army which came to attack them at Karbala. The aim of the army was to obtain his allegiance for the despotic ruler, Yazid ibn Muawiya, who was out to destroy Islam.

That was the time when the Muslim "Ummah" had lost all the Islamic values and was going back to the pre-Islamic age of "jahiliyyah", the Age of Ignorance and Pagan practices in the Arabian Peninsula. The Prophet of Islam (s) had destroyed all those pagan practices and transformed the society by the introduction of Islamic values at the expense of his sweat, tears and blood and that of his family and a small army of loyal and brave companions.

The rising of Imam Husayn ibn 'Ali (a) was purely for the purpose of carrying out his duty of "Amr bil-Ma'ruf" and "Nahi anil-Munkar." He clearly declared this purpose of his journey before leaving his home in Madina. The sole aim was to save Islam that his Grandfather, the Prophet of Islam (s), had built with his great sacrifices and that of his family and small band of loyal companions who fought in numerous battles against huge armies raised by the enemies to defeat him and destroy Islam while it was still in its infancy.

In another verse, chapter 3:110 Allah (swt) says, "And the believing men and the believing women are the protectors of one another. They enjoin what is good and forbid what is evil, and they keep up prayers and pay Zakat. They obey Allah and His Prophet. Allah will bestow Mercy on them. Indeed Allah is All-Mighty, All-wise."

This verse is comprehensive in the sense that it covers individuals, family and all believers of both genders in the Muslim communities. They share the same characteristics as described in the above-mentioned verse. They serve as role models for all Muslims practicing what they preach at all levels, as individuals, as parents and as members of the Muslim Society.

In a family where parents act as role models for their children by implementing "Amr bil-Ma'ruf" and "Nahi 'anil-Munkar" in their homes and outside their home environment, it can bring about the transformation of the whole Muslim society into the most respectable status at a national level. It will reflect a true picture of what Islam stands for and the core of its Message.

The key to the effectiveness of this pragmatic doctrine lies in the practical application of the principle contained in chapter 61:2/3. Allah (swt) says, "O' you who believe, why do you say that you, yourselves do not do." In the next verse Allah (swt) says, "It is most detestable and disliked by Allah that you say what you do not do." This is the universal principle that applies to those who preach to the people to do what they themselves do not do, or not to do what they themselves do. Their words have no effect on their audience. On the contrary, they are disrespected and become a laughing stock.

Words have to be backed up by deeds to be credible. Otherwise they are considered as petty and frivolous. This applies most especially to scholars, priests, writers and speakers who preach to the people to do good acts and to avoid evil acts while they themselves act contrary to their preaching.

Indeed, such people harm themselves by preaching because firstly, they are ineffective and secondly, they incur the displeasure and wrath of Allah (swt) as well as the disrespect of the people who consider them as hypocrites.

HADITH

Promoting the two principles among the people, the Prophet (s) said, "You people should enjoin good and forbid evil, or else Allah will impose wicked people to rule over you, irrespective of the existence of those who are good among you. Those who are good among you would pray to Allah (for relief) but their supplication would not be accepted." (Mahajjaat al-Bayzaa)

In another Hadith, the Prophet (s) instructed companions to avoid blocking people's way by sitting on the road. Companions replied that they could not help as they had no other place to sit and talk. The Prophet (s) told them, "If you cannot help but sit on the road, you should observe the rules of using the roads."

The companions again asked, "What are these rules for using the roads?" The Prophet (s) replied, "You should lower your gaze, do not look at the women passing on the road; you should not disturb or annoy people walking on it; you should answer people when they greet you; and you should exhort them to do good and forbid evil" ('Amr bil-Ma'ruf and Nahi 'anil-Munkar"). (Mahajjat al-Bayzaa)

In another Hadith, the Prophet (s) said, "All talks of a human being are for himself, for his own good or bad. They do not actually benefit him except what he says in exhorting people to do good and forbidding them to commit evil. Words spoken in remembrance of Allah also benefit them." (Mahajjat al-Bayzaa)

In another instance, a man from the Kath'am tribe came to the Prophet (s) and said, "O' Prophet, what is the best ritual and belief in Islam?" The Prophet replied, "Belief in Allah ." "What is the best act after that?" The Prophet replied, "Maintaining family ties." The man continued, "What is next?" The Prophet responded, "Enjoining good and forbidding evil." Next, he asked an opposite question, "What is that which is hated most by Allah?" The Prophet replied, "Polytheism, next cutting family ties, and next to it enjoining evil and forbidding good." (Al-Kafi)

Imam Baqir (a) said, "Allah revealed to Prophet Shuaiyb that He would punish one hundred thousand people from his tribe among whom there were evil people who do evil acts and sixty thousand pious people who perform good deeds."

Prophet Shuaiyb asked, "O' Lord, the evil people should certainly be punished. But why would you punish the pious people as well?" Allah replied, "The pious people did not look down or despise them nor forbid them from performing evil acts and were not angry and scornful when I was wrathful to them." (al-Kafi)

CONCLUSION

1. FAILURE TO RESPOND TO THE CALL FOR HELP

Trials and tribulations, afflictions and setbacks are necessary components of life. They serve as eye-openers for human

beings who always tend to forget God and get absorbed in their quest for materialistic pleasures and enjoyments and love in amassing wealth. They help man to reconnect and become aware and conscious of God's existence and His Grace, countless Blessings and abundant sustenance ("n'imah"). Therefore, man has to accept them as part of life and move on instead of being bitter and resentful and blaming God for being cruel and unjust.

On the contrary, when man is blessed with fortunes ("n'imah") coming from all sides in abundance, he should help those who are less fortunate, "have nots", suffering from poverty, diseases and afflictions, needing help to ameliorate their sufferings. This is one of the ways of thanking God for His Bounties that he enjoys. Failure to help, ignoring the call to rescue the oppressed when he is in a position to do so, amounts to the denial of God's Bounties ("Kufran an-N'imah") which is a great and grave sin against God, punishable most severely in the hereafter, in addition to blocking the supplication from reaching Allah (swt).

2. GIVING UP OR STOPPING "'AMR BIL- MA'RUF WA NAHI 'ANIL-MUNKAR"

"Amr bil-Ma'ruf wa Nahi 'anil-Munkar", enjoining good and forbidding evil, are two basic pillars upon which a socially healthy and morally sound society can be built. They are closely connected elements of the religion for which all the Prophets from day one were appointed to establish. These two elements form the foundation for the reforms that can be introduced in the society to make it more progressive and vibrant.

Enjoining good and forbidding evil is not the concern of only a few people. It is a religious and moral obligation of every Muslim, man and woman, be he a scholar, a preacher, a writer

or a layman. Indeed, it is a universal moral and ethical requirement of human society for a peaceful and well-balanced life in the world. All religions require its followers to do it as a duty. Islam has codified it and integrated it into its beliefs system not only as a duty but also as an obligation.

In fact everyone should be involved in this mission. Whoever sees a vice being committed should attempt to stop it physically if it is desirable and possible or by talking to the person kindly and softly not to do it. If that too does not work, he should at least detest it and resent it in his heart for seeing an evil act being committed that he cannot stop. Obviously, this act of stopping cannot be done in an unruly manner. Otherwise, it would create mischief and unnecessary fights and enmity in the society.

In order to prevent such happenings, Islam has laid down certain conditions for carrying out this obligation. The details are contained in the "Risalah" of "Fiqhi Masa'el" of the Maraji' which can be briefly summarized as follows:

It is obligatory when a person:

1. Knows basically what is shar'i lawful ("halal") and unlawful ("haram") acts, unpleasant ("makruh") and pleasant ("mubah") acts, and also virtuous ("mustahab") and nasty ("munkar") acts
2. Has fairly good hope and possibility of a positive response in stopping sinful acts or, on the other hand, encouraging virtuous acts
3. Sees promising signs of not persisting committing sinful acts or, opposite to that, performing good and virtuous acts

4. Is aware of the intention of the person to commit sinful acts, or vice versa, to perform virtuous acts
5. Is not threatened from loss or harm to his life, his family, his property, his reputation or his public integrity.

WAYS OF ITS PERFORMANCE

The obligation is normally performed in three stages. By:

1. Showing displeasure and disapproval openly and feeling sad in one's heart at seeing evil acts being performed publicly with no one stopping them nor anyone showing concern to what is happening
2. Privately and politely talking to those committing evil acts to admonish them of the gravity of the sins they are committing against God openly and publicly, disobeying and defying His Commandments, or vice versa, persuading them to perform good and virtuous acts
3. Enforcing a stop to committing evil acts by appropriate measures, short of physical violence, wherever possible, without causing any harm to the person performing the obligation, or vice versa, enforcing the performance of good and virtuous acts such as "Salat", wherever possible, without causing any problem or harm to anyone.

To conclude, we can see clearly the merits of performing "Amr bil-M'aruf" and "Nahi 'anil-Munkar" and the demerits of stopping or abandoning to perform, as well as their positive and negative consequences, respectively, on the individual, family, society and nation as a whole. It is therefore rational and just that abandoning or stopping it would block our supplications

from reaching Allah (swt) in this world and severe punishment to follow in the hereafter.

Before we close the chapter, it is worthwhile to mention that there is one final category of sins that has not been included in the recent edition of the commonly used book of Du'a, the famous Mafatih al-Jinan of Shaykh Abbas al-Qummi. However, it appeared in the previous edition of the Mafatih. It also appears in several authoritative books and also in the commentaries that have been written by several renowned authors and commentators.

The category of the sins is given below in the transliterated Arabic script, its simple English translation and a brief commentary.

SINS THAT SUPPRESS OR CAUSE A BREAKDOWN OF HOPE (IN THE MERCY OF ALLAH):

"O' Allah forgive my sins which suppress or cause a breakdown of hope in Your Mercy."

"We have discussed in detail about lack or loss of hope in the Mercy of Allah (swt) in the previous chapter under the different category of sins. Therefore, we do not need to discuss it again here." According to Imam Sadiq (a), four types of sins result in the suppression or the breakdown of hope in the mercy of Allah (swt):

1. Sustaining a sense of sadness, despair, dejection as well as lack of hope in getting the mercy of Allah (swt) ("Qat'ar-Raja' fi Rahmatil-Llah")
2. Lack of hope in Allah's compassion and clemency ("Adam 'an Fadhlil-Llah wa Joodihi")

3. Reliance on someone other than Allah (swt) to get help from him to meet his wants ("I'timad 'ala ghairil-Llah li qadhail Hajaat")
4. Lack of belief in Allah (swt)'s words that He would forgive all sins of His servant ("ibad") ("Adamal Iman fi Mawaidil-Llah 'anil-Ghufranuz-zunub").

With regard to relying on somebody other than Allah (swt), Imam Sajjad (a), in one of his Du'as in Sahifa al-Sajjadiyyah says, "My Lord, how many of them (people) who sought honor from other than You have been dishonored; those who sought wealth from other than You suffered from poverty; and those who sought greatness from other than You were dishonored and disgraced."

Disbelieving or doubting in Allah (swt)'s words that He will surely grant the wants of those who pray to Him for their fulfillment is a grievous sin. In this respect it is narrated by Muhammad ibn Abdullah, the grandson of Imam Baqir (a), that he once met Muhammad ibn 'Ajlani who was in a dire need of financial help and was on his way to see the governor of Madina to beg for help. He told him that it would be futile for him to do so because he had heard from his uncle Imam Sadiq (a) that Allah (swt) said to one of His Prophets, "I swear by My Greatness and Majesty that I will cut off the hope of every distressed person who gets despaired of My help and instead expects to get it from anyone other than Me.

I will also disgrace him in the eyes of the people and distance him from My Grace and Favor. It is deplorable that My servant gets dissatisfied and disappointed with Me and instead relies for relief from anyone other than Me while he knows that I control the destinies of everyone. What makes him hope to get anything from anyone other than Me when I am the All-

Generous and All-Sufficing Lord of everyone?" (Anis al-Lail fi Sharhi Du'a al-Kumay!)

دُعَاءُ كُْمِيلٍ

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CHAPTER TWELVE

SIXTH CATEGORY OF SINS:

FORGIVENESS OF ALL SINS,
OFFENSES, ERRORS AND
WRONGDOINGS

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

رَبِّ اجْعَلْنِي مُقِيمَ الصَّلَاةِ وَمِنْ ذُرِّيَّتِي ۚ رَبَّنَا
وَتَقَبَّلْ دُعَاءِ

O' Lord! make me keep up prayer and (also) make my
descendants (keep up prayer), O' our Lord, accept my
supplication. (Q: 14:40)

HIGHLIGHTS

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CHAPTER TWELVE

SIXTH CATEGORY OF SINS: COVERS ALL SINS, OFFENSES, ERRORS AND WRONGDOINGS

"O' Allah, Forgive every sin and every offence that I have committed against You and every error or mistake that I have done against You."

We have now come to the last category of sins mentioned by Imam 'Ali (a) in the Du'a. This is the general category which embraces all sins and errors of all types we can think of that we commit, some knowingly and others unknowingly. They are innumerable. Many of them are against the rules of Allah (swt) and many others are against the rights of fellow human beings and other creatures of Allah (swt). First, let us examine the difference between sin ("dhanmb") and error ("khatia")

Difference between Sin ("dhanmb") and Mistake or Error ("khatia")

SIN

Sin is an offence or a defiance against the rule of Allah (swt) or an infringement of the right of a fellow human being committed intentionally to oppress the individual. Sin can therefore be against Allah (swt) or against a fellow human being. The physics of sin have been discussed in detail in Chapter Three; unless

forgiven, Allah (swt) will punish the person who has committed the sin; it suffices to say here that sin damages the spiritual heart of an individual. When sins of all types are committed repeatedly, the damage continues to mount and ultimately kills the heart completely and irreparably.

A person who is outwardly moving with a dead spiritual heart is now capable of committing any sin, even killing an innocent human being remorselessly in cold blood. It also suffices to say here that forgiveness cannot be obtained freely without first reforming oneself.

Forgiveness has its limitations and also conditions such as, first, one has to admit that one has committed the sin; second, that one feels remorseful for having committed the sin; third, that one is fully determined to exercise an iron will to reform oneself not to commit the same sin again. The repentance should meet the conditions of 'Taubatan Nasuha', defined fully in Chapter Three, the Physics of Sins.

In this connection, our Ae'mmah (a) have also taught us the prayer called Salat at-Tauba. It is a four-rakat Salat prayed in two parts. In this Salat after Surah al-Hamd, we recite three times Surah al-Ikhlās and once Surah an-Nās and once Surah al-Falaq. After the Salat is over, a short Du'a is recited for one's "maghfirat" and that of all Mu'mineen and Mu'minaat, along with a strong determination not to commit the sin ever again.

ERROR

Error, on the other hand, is normally an unintentional mistake which is done in good faith owing to either an oversight or ignorance of the issue at hand. Error or mistake can occur as a result of the ignorance of "Shari'" rule or an oversight in social relationship and interaction with people. These errors

sometimes can cause social as well spiritual damage unless forgiven by Allah (swt) or the person who has been offended.

When a person occasionally either owing to ignorance or succumbing to his "Nafse-e-Ammarah" (that part of the human heart or self that prompts man to commit an evil act) commits a sin or later repents sincerely, the door for repentance is always open for him provided he does not repeat the same sin. *"(Acceptance of) repentance by Allah (swt) is only for those who commit evil out of ignorance, and then repent promptly, they are the ones whose repentance Allah will accept and Allah is All-Knowing and All-Wise."* (Q. 4:17)

Basically, the heart of a human being created by Allah (swt) is pure and untarnished. Every time that a man commits an evil act, a sin, it creates a stain or rust on his heart. This stain or rust deepens and spreads farther and farther until it covers the whole heart. When the heart or soul is completely blackened by the rust formed during the entire life of a person, then there is no repentance for him. Allah (swt) says, *"But repentance is not for those who go on committing sins (all their life) and when death approaches anyone of them, he says, 'I repent now'..."*) (Q. 4:18)

In another Chapter No. 83 verses 14-17 Allah (swt) says, *"Indeed, but on their hearts are rusts and stains of the sins which they commit. Verily, on that Day (the Day of Resurrection) they will be veiled, blocked from seeing the Light of Allah (swt). The righteous will be joyous on seeing the Glory and the dazzling Light of Allah (swt), while the eyes of the sinful will be veiled from seeing this Glory and Light and the joy that the righteous will experience. On the other hand, the sinful will see and perceive the reality of the fire of punishment to which they*

will be subjected. Furthermore, they will enter the Fire of Hell and it

Imam 'Ali (a), in his final supplication for the forgiveness of the sins mentioned in this series prays to Allah (swt) to forgive all sins that have been specified in all the categories, ranging from those that tear the veil of defense against sins through those that bring down adversities and calamities, change favors into disfavours, block supplications from reaching Allah (swt), and bring about trials and tribulations to those that suppress or cut down hope for the forgiveness of sins.

In addition, Imam supplicates to his Lord to forgive all other sins and mistakes he has committed during his life. These sins and errors include all major and minor sins of all categories committed either intentionally or unintentionally, concealed or exposed, committed during young as well as old age; in short, every sin and every mistake committed throughout life. Indeed, they are countless, many of which we do not even know until we come to be given our Book of Record of our deeds on the Day of Judgment.

When the infallible Imam, purified with thorough purification by Allah (swt), prays in this moving supplication in a state of prostration with tears flowing from his eyes, where do we stand as servants who are full of sins and errors?

Imam teaches us how to supplicate to our Lord who is most Merciful and Oft-Forgiving to forgive our sins and save us from the torments of the Hell-Fire. We need first to understand what we recite in the Du'a. Recitation without understanding will not serve the purpose of the Du'a. Furthermore, even if we understand what we recite but our mind is not focused and

distracted with worldly thoughts, we will not get the spiritual benefit of the Du'a.

So the two essential requirements of effective recitation of the Du'a are: firstly, to understand the Du'a and secondly, to have full focus of the mind ("hudhur-e-qalb"). If we are able to fulfill these conditions of effective recitation, we will be able to achieve the full benefit of the Du'a. This is a powerful Du'a that can reform us into changing our thinking and behavior so as to achieve nearness to Allah (swt) whereby we can feel His Glory and Majesty in our souls and minds and see things differently from what we see now.

دُعَاءُ كُمْبِل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

CONCLUSION

A Brief Commentary by

MU'ALLIM MUHAMMADHUSEIN KERMALI

CONCLUSION

PART ONE: HIGHLIGHTS

GROUND LEVEL

We now summarize the topics we have discussed and analyzed in the Twelve Chapters of the First Part of the Book on the simple and easily comprehensible commentary on the Du'a of Prophet Khidr (a) given by Amir al Mu'mineen 'Ali ibn Abi Talib (a) to Kumayl ibn Ziyad al Nakha'i, a close and trusted companion of the Imam as a gift after a special request. The Du'a is well-known simply as Du'a-e-Kumayl which we recite every Thursday in our Centers and as a part of our A'amal on the 15 Night of Sha'ban for which it is specifically and strongly recommended.

This Du'a belongs to the private domain of our Ae'mmah (a) and has great merits and benefits when it is recited with discipline and understanding. It is stated that this Du'a should be recited at least once in one's life. This signifies its great importance. The Du'a can be divided into various levels for ease of understanding. It has a logical flow and a gradual rise in the spiritual levels, reaching the peak at the end.

LEVEL ONE

The ten most powerful "Asmaa'", specially selected by the Imam from the ninety nine "Asmaa'-ul-Husna'", the Most Beautiful Names of Allah (swt), as a means of intercession are discussed in detail in Chapter One. These "Asmaa'" have the wonderful effect of instilling in one's mind a sense of security and peace and a feeling of satisfaction that Allah (swt) is the

only One who is the All-Merciful Lord who accepts supplication for the grant of one's wants.

LEVEL TWO

The Nature of Sins and the categories of the six specifically selected sins from countless sins that are usually committed and for which the Imam asks Allah (swt) for forgiveness are also analyzed and discussed in detail in Chapter Two. The tremendous harm and destruction in the various fields of our physical and spiritual existence here and in the hereafter are explained at length to show the gravity and seriousness of the sins and the need to avoid them. They range from those that tear the veil of defense/destroy the immune system in-built in man to those that cut down and crush hope for the Divine Mercy to forgive all sins and errors, both minor and major, exposed or concealed.

Chapters Three through to Chapter Twelve that follow are devoted to describing and analyzing all the six categories in great detail. A total of forty four types of major sins that cover all aspects of life from personal to social, moral, religious and political together with the grievous punishments for each offence are explained in detail. In some cases measures to avoid them are also suggested.

Forgiveness and the pre-requisites that one must fulfill to obtain it are also briefly discussed. A strong commitment not to repeat the sin is one of them, in addition to the acknowledgement and reliance on the intercession. Lessons that the Du'a teaches us are also discussed. It is important to remember them while we recite the Du'a. The introductory ground level of the Du'a ends here.

The principal aim is to remove the problems or the obstacles created by tons of sins blocking the supplicant ("salik") from advancing closer to Allah (swt) by obtaining forgiveness of the sins which have been committed both in the past and in the present time.

PART TWO: HIGHLIGHTS OF WHAT TO EXPECT

The second part of the Book will discuss and analyze the various levels of the spiritual rise which the supplicant experiences reaching the peak at the end of the Du'a. The total of 146 verses in this part can be summarized into seven levels.

LEVEL ONE

At the first level the supplicant tries to gain closeness to Allah (swt) by his constant remembrance (Zikr); he says, "O' Allah, there is no one to forgive my sins or conceal my misdeeds and change my wrongdoings into righteous deeds except You. ... I have wronged myself, oppressed my soul by constantly sinning against You in defiance and ignoring Your favors and blessings to me." The supplicant continues to plead and says, "O' My Master, I beg You by Your might not to let my sins and wrongdoings prevent my Du'a from reaching You and not to disgrace me by exposing my secret sins, my evil acts and my constant negligence and defiance..."

LEVEL TWO

Finding his pleading inadequate and ineffective, the supplicant continues, "O' my Lord, my Protector, my vain desires and my enemies led me to exceed Your limits and disobey Your commandments... I have come to You, O' my Lord, confessing, apologizing, regretting, repentantly, admitting my sins; broken-

hearted and fully submitting to You, finding no place to run away from wrongdoings, nor any place of escape."

"O', You who are the resort of the runaway and the guilty. Accept me and shelter me under Your infinitive Mercy. Have Mercy and free me from the heavy chains of sins."

"Have Mercy on the weakness of my body, the softness of my skin and the fragility of my bones. O', You who created me, nourished me and bestowed on me your favors abundantly by your Kindness and Generosity have Mercy on me."

LEVEL THREE

At this level, the supplicant gets into the intense desire of getting closer to Allah (swt), but his grave sins still pose a problem preventing him to get closer. He sees the visions of the punishment hanging over his head and in this state he continues to supplicate saying with deeper emotions:

"O', my God, my Master, my Lord, will You see me being punished with fire after I have declared my belief in Your unity, and after my heart has taken in Your knowledge; and after my tongue has been constantly active in Your remembrance; and after my heart has been filled with Your love; and after my sincere confession and my humble appeal to Your Lordship-?. No! O', Allah. You are too kind and generous to abandon Your servant whom You have nourished, protected and sheltered, and to inflict miseries on him whom You have maintained and brought up under the shadow of Your Mercy."

LEVEL FOUR

Carried by his heavy emotions and tears in his eyes, the supplicant continues and says, "I cannot imagine, O', my Master, my God and my Protector that You would slap fire on

the faces that submissively bowed down in prostration before Your Greatness;

Or the tongues (the faculty of speech) that have sincerely confirmed Your Unity and all the time express praise and grateful thanks to You;

Or the hearts that have confirmed Your Divinity with conviction;

Or the minds that have built up the knowledge about You with total submission to You;

Or the limbs that labored at the places of worship willingly in complete obedience and submission, praising and glorifying You and begging in all humility for forgiveness. Such sort of severity cannot come nor expected of You as it is beyond Your Grace, for You are the Most Generous (Allah)."

The supplication still continues with the following words: "O', Lord, You know my weakness that I cannot bear even a minor affliction of this world and the sufferings affecting the population in this world even though such afflictions are temporary and short-lived. So, how I can bear the enormous and most painful sufferings and punishments of the hereafter which are of long duration and everlasting effect, and whose sufferers are given no rest as they are the result of Your wrath, Your vengeance and Your severity that neither the heavens nor the earth can withstand or bear? O', my Master how can your servant who is weak, insignificant, poor, humble, and needy be able to bear them?"

LEVEL FIVE

The supplicant is now entering into a deeper emotional state and says, "O', my God, my Lord, my Master and my Guardian, why and for what matters shall I complain to You and for which

of them shall I lament and weep; shall I lament for the extreme pain of the punishment or the length of the suffering? So, if you punish me along with Your enemies, and those who are liable for punishment, and separate me from Your close and beloved servants, I will call out to you, O' my Lord."

"O', my God, my Master, my Guardian and my Lord, if I could somehow bear Your punishment, how would I bear the separation from You; and even if I could at all bear the scorching fire of Your Hell, how would I bear being kept away from Your Mercy and Kindness; and how could I remain burning in the Fire while I would be longing for Your forgiveness?"

"So, by Your Honor and Might, O', my Master and Guardian I swear that if You were to allow me to speak, I would cry out in lamentation to You among the inmates like the cry of those who long for Your kindness and compassion, and I would scream like the agonizing call of those who call for help, and I shall weep profusely (for having been cast away from Your nearness) like the wailing of those who are mourning the passing away of a beloved friend; and I shall call loudly and openly to You asking, 'Where are You, O', the Guardian of the believers; O', the hope and the resort of those who "know" you; O' the helper of those who call for help; O', the beloved of the hearts of the true believers; O', the Lord of the universe?"

LEVEL SIX

At this semi-final level the supplicant is approaching the peak of his emotions and says, "O' my God, Glory and Praise are for You, would You wish to be seen as ignoring the voice of a Muslim servant imprisoned in the Hell because of his defiance, and tasting the punishment therein because of his sins, and confined within its layers of fire because of his crimes and

evildoings, and he is crying out and speaks of faith in Your Mercy, and calls out as those who believe in Your Unity, and comes to You by seeking Your Lordship's intercession?"

"O', my Lord, how could he then remain under continuous punishment when he hopefully relies on Your previous Forbearance, Compassion and Mercy?"

"And how can the fire cause painful burns to him while he hopes for Your Grace and Mercy? And how can its deafening and roaring flames encompass him when You hear his voice and see his place and predicament? And can he bear its groaning flames when You know his weakness? And how can he be thrown between its layers when You know his sincerity? And how could its keepers torture him when he calls out to You, 'O, my Lord.' And how could You abandon him therein while he has hope in Your Grace that you would free him from it? Far for it be from You, it is not expected of You nor of what is well-known of Your Grace nor is it similar to the goodness and kindness You have shown to those who recognize your Unity."

The suppliant has by now raised his mental/spiritual level to the point that he can now, with all humility and with a heavy heart, ask tearfully for the forgiveness at that hour and in that night, of all his sins and wrongdoings, all evil and shameful acts done secretly and openly and many others which have been covered and veiled by Allah (swt)'s Mercy and kindness. He implores His Power and His predetermination of all affairs of man. And, at the same time, he prays to Him to increase his joy in all the goodness that He has bestowed on him, and the kindness He has extended to him, and the virtues He has opened up, and the sustenance He has increased abundantly, and the sins He has forgiven, and the magnanimity by which He

has covered his wrongdoings. He also prays for the fulfillment of several other wants and wishes.

LEVEL SEVEN

This brings the supplicant to the peak of his spiritual rise when he raises his face and hands, absorbed in total submission to his Lord and addresses Him,

“So, towards You, my Lord, I turn my face and look to You in total humility and to You I stretch forth my hands.”

“By Your Honor and Might answer my supplication, and grant me my wishes, and by Your Grace do not cut off my hopes, and protect me from the mischief and harm my enemies from among the jinns and men might do to me. O’, He whose pleasure is readily and willingly obtained, forgive him who owns nothing but supplications, for You do what You will. O’, you whose Name is the remedy for all illnesses, whose remembrance is the cure of all diseases, and whose obedience makes a man independent and self-sufficient, have mercy on him whose capital asset is hope and whose weapon and shield are tears. O’ He who bestows his bounties amply. O’, He who wards off misfortunes. O’, Light that illuminates the mind of those who are lonely in darkness. O’, the All-Knowing, who is the original source of all knowledge which is in His essence. Bless Muhammad and his pure progeny and grant me what befits your Benevolence and Magnificence and Bless Muhammad and his pure progeny.”

We now come to the end of the Du’a which, if prayed with utmost humility and all the heart and the mind put in it, can reform a person to see things differently and enlighten him to become one of the “urafaa” and draw him closer to Allah (swt).

Before we close it must be stressed that the core message of the Du'a is that no one should ever lose hope in the limitless Mercy of Allah (swt), for He can forgive all sins if the sinner acknowledges his sins, makes a firm commitment never to repeat them again and sincerely with all his heart and soul prays to Allah (swt) by seeking the intercession of His Mercy. The following Verse of the Qur'an assures all those who have done "asraf", wrongdoings on their souls, committed huge sins in defiance of their Lord, not to lose hope and that Allah (swt) can forgive all sins except those which are unforgivable such as "shirk" by associating a partner with Allah (swt).

قُلْ يَا عِبَادِيَ الَّذِينَ أَسْرَفُوا عَلَىٰ أَنْفُسِهِمْ لَا
تَقْنَطُوا مِنْ رَحْمَةِ اللَّهِ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَغْفِرُ الذُّنُوبَ
جَمِيعًا ۚ إِنَّهُ هُوَ الْغَفُورُ الرَّحِيمُ

"Say (O' our Prophet Muhammad that Allah assures His servants) "O', My servants who have committed extravagances against their own selves, do not despair of the Mercy of Allah. Surely, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, He is the All-Forgiving, the All-Merciful." (Q. 39:53)

دُعَاءُ كُمْيَل

AMIR AL-MU'MINEEN, 'ALI IBN ABI TALIB (A)

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